GAMBLING WITH LABOR

Labor Relations in the South African Casino Resort Industry

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Master thesis in Human Geography
Department of Sociology and Human Geography
University of Oslo
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Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
CC	Central committee
CCAWUSA	Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa
CCMA	Council for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
CEO	Chief executive officer
CFO	Chief financial officer
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPI	Consumer price index
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPN	Global production network
HARWU	Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in Africa
IUF	International Union of Food Workers
LEC	Local executive committee
MVG	Most valued guest
NC	National congress
NEC	National executive committee
NWC	National working committee
RAWU	Retail and Allied Workers Union
RC	Regional congress
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
REC	Regional executive committee
RGC	Regional general council
SACCAWU	South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union
SACP	South African Communist Party
SAPS	South African Police Service
SSC	Shop stewards committee
SWOP	Society, Work and Development Institute
UNI	Union Network International

UU	Unite the Union
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand

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1. Introduction

In early December 2009 the trade union South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) embarked on a seven week long strike action against the South African casino resort industry's top dog, Sun International. The casino resort giant is a multimillion dollar company that owns 13 casino resorts in South Africa (the majority of the domestic market) as well as numerous resorts in several other countries in Southern Africa and Latin America. It provides well-to-do (South) Africans and foreign tourists with gambling, entertainment and leisure activities, as well as hosting large sports events. It also lures poorer segments of the populace to gamble away their hard-earned money on their myriad slot machines in a country where half a million people are considered addicted to money games and 57 per cent of the adult urban population gambles.[1] It represents the pinnacle of modern day capitalism as it creates little material value, but is in the business of exclusively accumulating cold, hard cash. The industrial action that is investigated in this thesis also coincided with two major sporting events in South Africa, the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup and the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Both of these mega events impacted the industrial action in their own way.

Much of the focus in the human geography literature is on global economic trends and the agency of labor in a globalizing environment where corporations become more and more multinational and transnational. Capital flight is a common way of innovating production and cutting labor costs, and outsourcing to areas with low labor costs and poor labor rights. This thesis focuses on the relations between labor and capital in an industry that cannot take advantage of capital flight, as spatial fixes is not only a problem that potentially devalues capital, but the very rationale for the existence of the capital. A spatial fix is capital's need to build a fixed space, or landscape, which is necessary for it to function at a certain point in its history (Jessop 2006). The tourism industry, and especially the casino resort industry, produces commodities that must be consumed in the place where they are produced, and as such the geographical location is inescapable. Therefore the landscape becomes a product itself, and consumers pay for an experience. This means that capital is confined to place and is in a position where "scale-jumping" is harder to accomplish. When capital is fixed in place it utilizes other means of cutting labor costs, such as outsourcing of work tasks on the site of production through the use of catering companies, security companies, and labor brokers.

[1] http://www.casasa.org.za, accessed 21.11.2011.
[2] http://sabcnews.com, accessed 11.02.2011; http://www.iol.co.za, accessed 11.02.2011.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore labor relations in the casino resort industry in South Africa, and to contribute to a holistic understanding of labor agency by taking into account one sector of the tourism industry. Although a lot of research has been done on hotel workers (see Bagguley 1990, McNeill 2008, Berntsen 2010 and Knox 2010), not much has been written about the tourism industry – such as resorts, amusement parks, and wild-life, parks, etc. – in labor geography. Less, if anything, has been written about the gambling sector. The literature on tourism in labor geography has mostly focused on the relations between workers and guests, a relationship that will be commented upon in this thesis. However, the focus of this thesis is on the relations between the trade union and the company. This means that the study is exploratory to the extent that it investigates a sector that is not much explored in the literature, and it is descriptive as it documents and describes the phenomenon of interest (Marshall and Rossman 2006). The thesis also has a theoretical purpose, to attempt to apply the strategic-relational approach to understanding structures and agencies in an attempt to help develop a holistic view of labor agency as proposed by Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2011).

Research questions

Contextualizing labor struggles is important, not only in geographical terms, but also in historical terms. Since the purpose of this thesis is to explore the labor relations in the South African casino resort industry during an industrial action that coincided with two mega events, several issues have to be considered. Several emergent structures are in play, such as the trade union's ability to make use of labor regulating institutions, its position as a member of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and its position in an international trade union environment. In order to explore these structures the first research questions is:

> *What structures and geographical scales did SACCAWU utilize during the industrial action, and what impact did these structures and geographical scales have on the outcome of the industrial action?*

Secondly, this thesis examines the industrial action as it unfolded in two different casino resorts. As one is located in an urban area, and the other in a rural area, there are some geographical differences between the two. In addition, to some extent, these resorts are both products of

historical structures, but in separate ways. To explore these differences, the second research question becomes:

> *How did the geographical differences, partly resulting from the heterogeneous labor history of South Africa, influence SACCAWU's agency during the strike action?*

The structure of the thesis

The thesis begins with the theoretical framework in chapter 2. This framework consists of fundamental theories of capital and labor within a Marxian geographical tradition. After presenting these theories, two of the issues that preoccupy labor geographers today are laid out. One is the issue of structure and agency. Understanding the agency of workers is considered a very important issue by labor geographers today, but theorizing on the issue has been deemed inadequate. In an attempt to overcome the binary thinking of structure and agency, this thesis will make an effort to apply Bob Jessop's strategic-relational approach, with some refinements suggested by current labor geographers. As the strategic-relational approach is closely tied to the state structure as a strategic selectivity (this term will be explained in chapter 2) and the focus of this thesis is not so much on the state, the approach is mostly applied to overcome a binary understanding of structure and agency in favor of a dialectic understanding. Next, the agency of workers and especially trade unions is explored. Trade unions have always been the most efficient organizations for workers to voice their concerns and make demands, but more recent research points to a failure of trade unions in adequately maintaining the interests of workers in a post-fordist production regime of global and hyper-mobile capital. In this case capital is geographically fixed and the trade union movement in South Africa is traditionally strong. The third issue that is presented in the theoretical framework is geographical scales. Scales have traditionally been considered more or less fixed geographical magnitudes, but the current view holds that they are not ready-made politico-economic boxes in which actors are forced to operate, but rather they are being produced by the very actors that operate within them.

Chapter 3 presents the research methods. Doing research is a learning experience and at times one at that, fraught with insecurity and uncertainty. However well planned the research

might be, unforeseen and unplanned for events are always a risk. This will be reflected on in this chapter.

Chapter 4 presents the historical background of the present case. It deals with the transformation of the South African society from apartheid through the reformation of the society into a capitalist democratic society. The labor movement was central to the discontinuation of the apartheid regime, which has created a political path dependency in modern day South Africa that is important to understand in relation to the case in question. Also, many of the effects of the apartheid era are still alive in modern day South Africa.

Chapter 5 gives brief presentations of the company, Sun International, the trade union, SACCAWU, and labor-regulating institutions in South Africa. Secondly, it presents the origins of the industrial action, the demands that the union put forward to the company, and the outcome of the industrial action.

Chapter 6 provides the analysis. Firstly, it focuses on the role that the mega events, the Confederations Cup and the World Cup, had on the industrial action. Secondly, it addresses the demands that the union presented to the company, before analyzing of the role of geography on the industrial action is given. Lastly, chapter 7 concludes.

Clarification of some central terms and concepts

Some of the terms and concepts used in this thesis require a short clarification:

Africans: The term is used consequently to mean South Africans of African ancestry, as opposed to South Africans of a European or Asian ancestry.

Casino resorts: Even if a formal distinction is made between casinos (which are primarily gambling facilities that also have hotels, and conference and entertainment facilities) and resorts (which in addition to these also may have outdoor recreational activities such as hiking and safari parks), the arguments in this thesis are applicable to both. This, along with a need for keeping the informants (and by extension the workplaces) anonymous, is why these terms have been compounded into the term “casino resort”.

Coloreds: The term refers to people of mixed European and African ancestry, and was used by the apartheid government as part of a classification system of civil rights based on ethnicity. The term has survived and is still used in official statistics, along with “White”, “Indian” and “African”.

Labor broker: A person or company that hires labor for a client in order to alleviate that client of the process of directly hiring labor as well as cutting costs on labor.

The (trade) union: In the theory this term is meant to describe the abstract concept of trade unions, while in the presentation of the data and the analysis it consequently refers to SACCAWU.

2. Capitalism and labor

This chapter first briefly presents theories of capital and labor. Secondly it presents a discussion on the nature of structures and agency. These first two parts of the chapter are on a higher level of abstraction than the subsequent ones which first deal with the theorizations of the agency of workers and trade unions, and lastly theories of labor relations in the workplace. Striking a balance between the abstract nature of theories and the everyday situations they are meant to describe can be quite a challenge, as David Harvey (1996, 44; emphasis in original) points out:

> Theory is never a matter of pure abstraction. *Theoretical practice* must be constructed as a continuous dialectic between the militant particularism of lived lives and a struggle to achieve sufficient critical distance and detachment to formulate global ambitions.

The geography of capital and labor

For Marx (1990, 129) the physical production is the most important production of value. Commodities are the end-result of this physical production, and the value created is defined by "the amount of labour socially necessary, or the labour-time socially necessary for its production." Labor then is something that produces things of value that fulfill human needs. Labor is a necessity imposed by nature that allows for the material exchange between humans and nature. Without it there would be no human life. While Marx emphasizes that physical production is the most important production of value, David Harvey, in *The Limits to Capital* (2006), argues that in addition to production, it is necessary to also understand the circulation of capital. According to Harvey value is only value when in motion. This means that production is, rather than being the basis for capital, a problem for capital. When capital is physically fixed it potentially becomes devalued as it is held up in commodities. Commodities such as land, buildings, machines and labor makes capital subject to markets collapsing, innovations by others that might cause obsolescence, or labor unrest. This becomes, however, a necessary risk as some value must be fixed in order for capital to circulate. In an attempt at displacing this value, as it cannot possibly be dealt away with, the financial markets and credit systems have become ever more potent. By circulating capital as paper or electronic representations it is allowed to become exchangeable as value not yet realized; but merely as a promise of future value.

For workers and their communities, Harvey (2006) upholds, there are two consequences of this mechanism. The first is location. Through a theory of rent, Harvey shows that land

becomes a place for the circulation of value and the distribution of surplus value. Location on land that is situated close to markets (both markets for the sale of the product that is being produced and labor markets), natural resources, or other commodities provides an advantage in the sense that a greater amount of excess value is created. This excess value allows for increased rent and greater capital investment in fixed capital, such as better facilities. This spatial fixation is, of course, subject to the threats of devaluation through the aforementioned risks. For labor, the consequence of this is that the realization of what is assumed to be future values that are tied up in one physical location, might be invested in another area. It might be invested in a new production facility, which then leads to the devaluation of the first production facility, causing job-loss in the original location. "Under capitalism, the construction of a built environment […] might undermine its own reason for being" (Mitchell 2005, 83). This leads Harvey to conclude that geography is central to capital's functioning.

The other consequence for workers is their role as both producers and consumers. As Henderson (1999, 39; quoted in Mitchell 2005, 84; emphasis in original) argues:

> Unless capital does away with the human body, it will always face the "natural limitations of the labor-power itself" as a barrier to increased rates of production. Workers are the sites of biological processess and energy flows for which capital has only partial solutions (e.g., robotics). They are themselves obstacles to capitalism. Bodies persist. That they are *waged* bodies is a capitalist solution. That they are waged *bodies* is a capitalist problem.

As Polanyi (2002, 75) put it, "labor is only another name for a human activity which goes with life itself, which in turn is not produced for sale but for entirely different reasons, nor can that activity be detached from the rest of life." This

> inability to fully substitute for the bodily reproduction of the workers and labor power has come to occasion a whole realm of capitalist production for consumption and reproduction, the realm of capitalist-produced commodities that are sold and bought *for* reproduction (food, housing, etc.) (Henderson 1999, 39; quoted in Mithcell 2005, 84; emphasis in original).

Thus, workers and their communities are critical to the endurance of capital circulation, a circulation that "roots working people in place" (Mitchell 2005, 84). The places that are inhabited by the workers become part of the value of labor power. These places become contested through a struggle of who controls them; what, and who, will be in them; and who

pays for them. This means that the state of the places that workers live in must be factored into the cost of labor (Mitchell 2005). In places where the working class is better off, enjoying good living conditions, having recreational expenditures and drives cars to work, the cost of labor will be higher than in places of dilapidation and poor living conditions. Also, as Harvey (2006) points out, the better off the working class is the more mobile it is. Labor is a commodity that brings itself to the market. This freedom, however, comes with a price, as capital is allowed to move more freely as well when labor is mobile, thus being able to take advantage of new locations, so that labor stays under the control of capital.

Theories on capitalism and workers, from Marx through Harvey, have been criticized for treating labor in an undifferentiated manner. To take into account the gender, race and nationality of workers, the term "reproduction" has become an important mediator between "the structure of capitalism and the agency of workers" (Mitchell 2005, 86). The realm of reproduction was briefly touched upon in the second quote from Henderson above. As a way of dealing with the needs of workers, capital turns what is necessary for reproduction, i.e. food and housing, into a commodity that must be traded for money; turning it into yet another area of capitalist accumulation. In addition, "processes of reproduction are shot through with gender relations" (Mitchell 2005, 86), meaning that the value created circulate differently depending on gender. Katz (2001, 711) upholds that reproduction "is […] a set of structured practices that unfold in dialectical relation with production, with which it is mutually constitutive and in tension." Also "the production and the reproduction of the labor force calls forth a range of cultural forms and practices that are also geographically and historically specific" (Katz 2001, 711).

Just as Harvey (2006) pointed out in relation to production, reproduction is also geographically located. Massey (1995, 289) claims that "the dynamic of social reproduction varies geographically and so do its effects on social composition". She also explains, in her book *Spatial Divisions of Labour*, how women have become a new reserve army of labor. Women have become a cheap and easily controllable source of labor in the new division of labor due to their low level of organization, made possible by the "lack of previous experience of wage relations, the masculinity and sexism of the local culture" (Massey 1995, 290) that was established under the old division of labor. The new division of labor refers to the restructuring of the labor force in post-industrial production, where the old hegemony of traditional industrial society where men labor for monetary value and women exclusively labor within the

reproductive sphere of the household (the old division of labor) is counterfeited. A third point that Massey makes is that capitalist society develops unevenly. This uneven development has two implications: "It is necessary to unearth the common processes, the dynamic of capitalist society" (Massey 1995, 289); while at the same time "it is […] necessary to recognise, analyse and understand the complexity of the unevenness itself" (Massey 1995, 289).

> Spatial differentiation, geographical variety, is not just an outcome: it is integral to the reproduction of society and its dominant social relations. The challenge is to hold the two sides together; to understand the general underlying causes while at the same time recognising and appreciating the importance of the specific and the unique (Massey 1995, 289).

This point will be revisited in the analysis when attention is turned to the geographical differences between the urban and the rural casino resorts. Smith (2010, 4) upholds that this uneven geographical development of capital is "the systematic geographical expression of the contradictions inherent in the very constitution and structure of capital." The geographical nature of capital, and labor's relation to it, has been extensively covered by the abovementioned authors and many others, and will not be delved into any deeper here. The rest of this chapter will focus on the dual terms *structure* and *agency*, and the agency of labor and trade unions in the capitalist structure.

Structure and agency – from dualism to duality

Beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the agency/structure binary has occupied a greater place in human geography with writers such as Derek Gregory, Nigel Thrift and the sociologist Anthony Giddens (Gregson 2005). Over a series of publications Anthony Giddens developed his structuration theory with which he attempted to clarify the convergence of the agency of informed humans and the social structures in which they are involved (Gregory 2000a). Giddens wanted to overcome the dualism of agency and structure that was occurring in the social sciences. He wanted to replace thinking along dualist lines by looking at the relationship between agency and structure as a *duality* instead. Contrary to the notion that structure is something that exists "above" agency, constraining it and limiting the possibilities of action, he maintained that structure was involved in every instance of action. Thus, he argued that structure was both constraining and enabling, and that "structure was an 'absent' order of differences, 'present' only

in the constituting moments of interaction through which it was itself reproduced and transformed" (Gregory 2000a, 798). The duality of agency and structure in Giddens' structuration theory rested upon three concepts: *reflexivity*, *recursiveness* and *regionalization*. Reflexivity is "the production and reproduction of social life [as] a skilled accomplishment on the part of knowledgeable and capable human subjects" (Gregory 2000a, 798), and thus an anti-functionalist statement that denounces "any transhistorical 'logic' or 'functional imperative'" (Gregory 2000a, 798). Recursiveness means that the conditions under which life proceeds are, not only not fully understood, but also not intended by social actors. These conditions are nevertheless directly involved in the reflexivity of social actors. Finally, regionalization implies that this recursiveness is dependent both on interactions in the current time and space, and interactions that transcends time (history) and space (geography). This "entail[s] the articulation of 'presences' and 'absences' through modes of regionalization that channel social life into and out of sites/locales/domains" (Gregory 2000a, 799), and is reminiscent of Hägerstrand's time-geography in which "time and space are resources that enter directly into the constitution of social life" (Gregory 2000b, 830).

Structuration theory has lost much of its status since the 1980s due to several criticisms. First, the theory has been criticized for being too abstract (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2011) and lacking in empirical sophistication (Gregory 2000a). Giddens' focus on knowledgeable and capable human agents overlooks the fact that "human action is highly differentiated in the scope and scale of its effects; and that some actions and some agents matter rather more than others" (Gregson 2005, 29). A second critique that has been leveled against Giddens is that the dualism that he has supposedly overcome is in fact not overcome at all, and that his theory actually lays the foundations for a methodological approach that "allows for either the analysis of strategic conduct or the analysis of institutions" (Gregory 2000a, 800), ignoring one when examining the other (Jessop 2001). This transposition of dualism from a theoretical to a methodological level can explain the lack of empirical illustration. Connected to the first criticism offered here is the reduction of agency into simply meaning action in everyday situations (Jessop 2001; Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2011), and the reduction of structure into rules and resources (Gregory 2000a). Thus structure loses its "autonomous properties which govern conduct quite independently of the creative and constituting capacities of actors" (Layder 1981, 75). Thrift (1996) indicates that Giddens' emphasis on time-space distanciation, which is a central part of his notion of

regionalization, does not do the job in overcoming the dualism of agency and structure, as his ontology consists of "interacting individuals and types of individuals, rather than the plurality of people in the webs of interdependencies" (Kilminster 1991, 98; quoted in Thrift 1996, 54). In Thrift's words, clearly adhering to actor-network theory, "Giddens over-emphasizes action as individual and never fully considers the ghost of networked others that continually informs that action" (Thrift 1996, 54).

Jessop (2001; 2008), through his development of the strategic-relational approach, has refined Giddens' structuration theory (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2011). Jessop's concern is with the institutional aspect of the structuration theory. While admitting that Giddens introduced time and space into institutional analysis – thus making it appealing to geographers, and connected institutions to specific forms of power and domination, Jessop laments Gidden's inability to "develop the full critical potential of these innovations" (Jessop 2001, 1222). Jessop upholds that the duality in Giddens' structuration theory is in fact dualism masquerading as duality. Jessop moved from viewing structure and agency as a dichotomy represented as external constraints and free-willed subjects, to structure as emergent structures and agency as socialized agents. In a dialectical maneuver Jessop instead examines the nature of structure and agency as

> structure in relation to action and action in relation to structure, rather than bracketing one of them. Structures are thereby treated analytically as strategic in their form, content, and operation; and actions are thereby treated analytically as structured, more or less context sensitive, and structuring. Applying this approach involves examining how a given structure may privilege some actors, some identities, some strategies, some spatial and temporal horizons, some actions over others; and the ways, if any, in which actors (individual and/or collective) take account of this differential privileging through strategic-context analysis when choosing a course of action (Jessop 2001, 1223).

This leads him to what he calls a "genuine dialectical duality" which involves structures becoming "structurally inscribed strategic selectivity" performed by socialized agents within emergent structures, and agency becoming "structurally oriented strategic calculation" by socialized agents made necessary by the emergent structures (see figure 1 in Jessop 2001, 1224 and figure 1.1 in Jessop 2008, 41). What is important to recognize about the strategic-relational approach is that structures do not "belong" to the past, present or future, but rather past, present and future structures are present in place at any given moment in time.

Scales of labor agency

Labor geographers, indeed human geographers in general, have become increasingly preoccupied with the construction of geographical scales. Herod (2011) demonstrates that the concept of scale was little theorized prior to the 1980s when it was applied simply as frames for research projects. In an early assessment of the debate, Herod (1991, 82) sums up the way geographical scale had been used in human geography up until then: Scales, mainly the urban, national and global, was "regarded merely as taken-for-granted 'natural' divisions of spatial organisation by which to order processes operating at different geographic resolutions." This led to an inability to explain theoretically the restructuring of capitalism at different geographical scales, as it was never problematized why the urban, national and global scales were the most commonly used ones, or what the connections between these scales were. Taylor, according to Herod (1991), was one of the first geographers to perform a critical examination of geographical scale, claiming that it was possible to discern a political economy of scale. He attempted to formulate the relationship between the real (the global scale), the ideological (the national scale) and experience (the urban scale); however, he did not manage to properly come to terms with the production of landscapes or even scales.

Smith, in *Uneven Development* (2010; originally published in 1984), further elaborates on the political economy of scale. He claims that processes of cooperation and competition between capitalists result in the production of geographical scales. The production of space is the enterprise of capitalism in its contradictory tendencies. For him, the urban scale is a product of daily labor markets, the national scale a product of strategies to conserve market control, and the global scale a product of wage-labor and the law of value. Critically, claims Herod (1991), Smith overlooks certain social mechanisms that capital relies on in the production of space and geographic scales. These include patriarchal social relations, gender divisions in labor markets and national legislation. Further, he tends to overlook class-based, gender-based and nationalist political struggles, downplaying the role of social agency, although he has later ameliorated this. Herod (1991, 84) also levels the critique that "scale needs to be treated dialectically. […] Scale is not merely socially produced but is also socially producing".

In more contemporary labor geography the production of space and geographical scales has been more elaborated on through empirical research, arguing for a better understanding of social agency and power relations. Bergene (2007, 144) makes the point that "scale is not

neutral, but rather an expression of power relationships, and multiple scales are simultaneously invoked". This stems from the fact that "geographical scales do not exist independently of human activities, and a vital part of the class struggle is the *construction* of the scale(s) at which the capital-labor relationship is constituted and negotiated" (144; emphasis in original). Bergene further claims that there is a need for a higher scale solidarity amongst workers in order to counteract the "scale jumping" of multinational corporations which has allowed them to evade national regulation.

> Agents of capital seek to upscale their operations and simultaneously attempt to downscale the negotiation of wages and working conditions, and hence confine workers' struggles to the local scale, or even to the level of the firm (Bergene 2007, 146).

There has also been a greater focus on the interplay of different scales and social actors. Herod (1995, 347) makes two important points in claiming that reserving "the global scale of action for capital […] is problematic". While, empirically, "it ignores the long history of trade unions' international activities;" it, theoretically, "denies workers their agency by assuming that they are incapable of creating structures which will allow them to operate globally." Agency and structure are entwined, in that the agency of workers (and trade unions) creates structures in which they can operate, and is directly tied to the construction of geographical scales.

Human geographers in the 1990s began to take an interest in the agency of workers. The agenda was to show that, just as capital, labor also had the agency required to affect economic landscapes. In the words of Andrew Herod (1997, 3):

> This means conceptualizing labor not merely in terms of "factors" of location or the exchange value of "abstract labor" but to treat working class people as sentient social beings who both intentionally and unintentionally produce economic geographies through their actions — all the while recognizing that they are constrained (as is capital) in these actions.

Wills (1998) also finds it hard to agree with the notion that workers are made passive by international capital, and is preoccupied with workers' ability to organize in the face of global capitalism. Castree (2000) underscores the fact that the globalization debate has a tendency to delimit worker agency to the local, as something immobile, while seeing capital agency as global and hyper-mobile. However, these, and several other, contributions within labor geography

stretching up to the present suffer from a limited theorization on agency (Herod 2001, Herod 2003, Savage 2006). Castree (2007, 858; emphasis in original) has made a call for "a *discriminating* grasp of worker agency that both informs and arises from a variety of empirical studies". Castree finds it odd that this analytical weakness exists, and refers to the theoretical understandings of agency of other social scientists such as Giddens and Bourdieu. Tufts and Savage (2009, 945; emphasis in original), however, feel that "perhaps it is not as important to construct theoretical analytical boundaries as it is to define labor geography as a *political project*". But, as Castree since put it (2007, 858), "a failure to distinguish kinds of agency and their enabling/disabling conditions leads to an inability among analysts to say much sensible about worker strategy, normatively speaking".

This call for a better theoretical understanding of agency had to some extent already been answered a decade earlier by Swyngedouw (1997) in his discussion on regulation theory as a way to understand socio-spatial relations, regulation, and the production of scale. He makes use of Bourdieu when he claims that "social relationships are incorporated in the form of habitus, acquired routines, rules, and norms[…], even if every player tries to ameliorate her or his hand in the game" (p. 146). Bourdieu (1977, 78 in Swyngedouw 1997, 161) himself defines habitus as

> the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations […] The Habitus produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the Habitus.

Swyngedouw (1997, 146) goes on to acknowledge that habitus is always scaled, and is always present in the little things that define a person as a member of a

> local class, gender, and ethnic position, a national and international division of labor, a (still) nationally regulated set of wage relations, a variety of local, regional, national, and European redistributional mechanisms, the vagaries of the international financial system, and so forth.

Hence, Bourdieu's habitus is an understanding of agency that is interconnected with structures. The habitus reproduces regularities, and situations have objective potentialities. This means that there are structural limits to what any personal, organizational, economic or political agency is capable of achieving.

Also Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2011) have answered Castree's (2007) call for a more theoretically coherent understanding of agency by giving a critical examination of Giddens' version of structuration. Giddens saw agency and structure as something that works simultaneously, and that this simultaneous interaction of agency and structure is present in all social interaction, so that determinism and voluntarism is transcended (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2011). Even so, Giddens has been critiqued for focusing too much on the everyday actions of well informed agents, so that the micro/macro dichotomy he wished to overcome, has led to a meso-level weakness. Even though Jessop has reiterated and modulated Giddens' structuration to make structure and agency appear less mechanical, both have been criticized for having a too abstract theorizing on agency (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2011). In both Bourdieu's and Giddens' theorizing on agency there is a strong sense that it acts together with structures in an inseparable manner. Cox (2005, 183) also echoes this point when he remarks that "the global is always manifest in the form of agents, albeit structured agents, […] likewise, to equate the local with agency would be to ignore the way in which local agents are structured in their activities, and not just by 'the global'".

Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2011) perform a "re-embedding" of agency in an attempt to develop a more holistic perspective on labor agency that Castree (2007) is asking for. This re-embedding implies trying to understand labor's agency in relation to several aspects of workers' lives. One of these aspects, which will not be emphasized here, is "the changing nature and scale of the organization of capital", i.e. "the increasingly globally integrated nature of contemporary production systems" (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2011, 221), or global production networks (GPNs). The reason for not giving much attention to this aspect of agency is that the casino resorts do not much utilize GPNs as they are not producing physical commodities for distribution to distant markets and are not engaged in the use of suppliers in places more distant than regional and local actors. These regional and local networks could of course be analyzed, but that is not within the range of this thesis. Another aspect of labor agency, which Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2011) elaborate on, is the agency of labor vis-à-vis the state. They look at this relationship from the basis of public sector unions, which is irrelevant for this thesis, but one useful point can be taken from their run-through of the subject. Referring to Webster et al. (2008) they point out that workers in the public sector can obtain what is called symbolic power by attracting sympathy from the general public. This can be obtain by organizing around issues such as basic services

that are produced for collective consumption by the general public, to which democratic authorities are accountable. This thesis argues that such solidarity links between organized labor and other citizen groups can also be forged in private service sectors when a citizen group is readily identifiable and easily found. This is the case in the casino resort industry as customers in the casino resort industry are relatively regular and consumers of a service on site (gambling, entertainment and recreational activities), a site which also happens to be the site of production. Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2011) further points out that the worker must also be understood in the reproductive sphere, which is why labor's relation to community becomes important. Workers are more than just a class. Workers are engaged in several subject positions such as union affiliates, wage earners, citizens, consumers, family members, and representatives of differing gender, ethnicity, nationality, etc. As such they are engaged in other issues except those at the workplace, and interactions between labor organizations other than trade unions, as well as interactions between trade unions and other social groups are important to acknowledge. To explain how labor agency can unfold in the concrete Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2011) mention Katz's threefold understanding of agency: agency might be construed as either (1) *resilience*, which is a way of getting by in everyday situations through the support of the family, friends, the local community and the likes; (2) *reworking*, through which one wishes to affect whatever structural reality one finds oneself in by attempting to alter the way it works; and (3) *resistance*, which would be the most extreme instance of agency as it is an attempt to gain control of the structures under which one is confined.

In conclusion to the preceding discussion, it is also important to acknowledge that there is a distinction between the agency of trade unions and other forms of labor agency. The discussion now turns to the agency of trade unions.

The agency of trade unions

This section takes Bergene's (2010, 71) claim that "the issue of a particular trade union consciousness has […] been discussed on three levels", as its point of departure. One level of trade union consciousness, and activity, is in its relation to that of political parties. Second, there has been a characterization of the consciousness of union officials as different from that of rank-and-file members. The third level of discussion has been the relation between the leaders and the

led (in any organization). In addition to these three points, the agency of trade unions in relation to temporary labor, and the international labor movement, will be discussed.

As for the first point, as Callinicos (1995, 13) points out, "workers have only one strength – their collective ability to withdraw their labour and so bring the capitalist system to a halt". The ability to see this power come to fruition is the reason why trade unions are so popular among workers, and so hated among capitalists. However, as Callinicos goes on to show, trade unions have two critical limitations. The first limitation is the divisions that are created by the capitalist system that the trade unions mirror; divisions between workers of different sectors of the economy, between white collar workers and blue collar workers, even between the employed and the unemployed. The second limitation to unions is that they are battling the effects of capitalist exploitation, fighting to improve workers' rights within the system; and not battling for control of the system, and the end of the exploitation. These two weaknesses lead to a third weakness, accepting that there is a division between politics and economics. This weakness leads to, on the one hand, what Lenin (1970) calls "economism" within the trade union movement, which is a struggle for better wages and working conditions; while, on the other hand, the governing party, or parties, are left to concern themselves with politics on behalf of the workers. This, in turn, leads to accepting that the "class-struggle between labour and capital is a non-political, economic and social issue" (Callinicos 1995, 14). Trotsky remarked that "since unions threaten the stability and logics of capitalism, the capitalists and the state seek to incorporate them" (Bergene 2010, 73). Callinicos (1995, 23) goes on to note how a trade union bureaucracy "provides the social base of reformist political parties." He points out that the British Labour Party and its counterparts in other European countries seeks to reform capitalism into a more humane system, while still being careful not to remove its ability to exploit the working class. Further, trade union leaders become committed to this reform of capitalism, instead of an overthrowing of capitalism altogether. This leaves the trade union movement in what Cliff (1969 in Callinicos 1995, 24) calls a "ridiculously impotent and wretched position" as it wants reforms but fears to put forward claims to the state, while at the same time it is afraid of the potential of reform among its rank-and-file members. As evidence of this tendency, Callinicos (1995) gives a host of examples from Europe between the 1919 miners' strike in Britain and the 1968 student revolt that sparked a general strike in France, and the famous 1980-81 ten million strong labor movement in Poland under the leadership of Lech Walesa. The 1919 miners' strike in Britain is

an especially potent example, as it was a year of much unrest. The Triple Alliance of mineworkers, railworkers, and transport workers were threatening to strike, while at the same time a police strike, army mutinies, widespread industrial unrest and revolutions in a Europe weakened by the First World War, was putting a lot of strain on the ruling class.

This view of the trade union movement as in contention with both the state and capitalism clearly has its roots in Marxist thinking. Marx and Engels viewed the state as a product of class struggle, and thus the state becomes an instrument with which one class controls another (Herod 2011). Obviously, it is the bourgeoisie that uses the state to control the working class. For Marx and Engels, the state could be controlled by either the bourgeoisie or the working class, depending upon the status of the class struggle. Smith (2010, 72-73) pursued this line of thought, claiming that the state's

> central function is social control on behalf of the ruling class, which means that in capitalist society it becomes manager of that which private capital is unwilling or unable to do. By repressive, ideological, economic, and an array of other social means, the state attempts to manage the suppression of pre-capitalist societies abroad and the repression of the working class at home, and at the same time attempts to ensure the economic conditions necessary for accumulation. In short it expedites and arbitrates the stable expansion of capitalism.

However, as Jessop (2008, 3) remarks, the state is neither "a subject – the state does, or must do, this or that"; nor "a thing – this economic class, social stratum, political party, or official caste." Rather its appearance and form is dependent on (amongst other things) what activities it exercises and at which scales it operates. The state's agency then is dependent on the individuals that it is comprised of, and this composition is dependent on the historical trajectory of the state.

Many radical left-wing thinkers (like Trotsky, Lenin, Marx and Callinicos) regard the state as closer to the interests of capitalism than the interests of labor. As Callinicos (1995) explains when talking about the separation of economics and politics, the Western capitalist democracy treats everybody as politically equal citizens. With one of the most liberal constitutions in the world, boasting equal civil rights and tolerance, the same can be said about the South African capitalist democracy. These political institutions are, amongst others, "universal suffrage, a multi-party system and the liberal freedoms (of speech, assembly, organization and so on)" (Callinicos 1995, 14). Callinicos points out that the formal equality of, say universal suffrage, hides huge inequalities in wealth, power and political influence. Anyone

may vote for their political representatives, but are not included in direct political decision making, and also has no saying over who runs the companies they work for. "You can vote for who you like at election times, but the same people are still there in the board rooms of Shell, Unilever, BP, British Gas and every other company" (Callinicos 1995, 14). This relationship has an additional side: not only does capitalist democracy permit the development of working class organizations; it also attempts to contain and incorporate such organizations. The success or failure of this attempt to contain the working class organizations depends on economic prosperity. As Mitchell (2005) pointed out, the living standards of the working class must be incorporated in the value of labor. Improvements in working class living standards are more likely to be accomplished in a rich and expanding economy, and, on the contrary, if the trade union struggle fails to bring about increases in real wages the workers are more likely to contest the capitalist framework (Callinicos 1995).

As for whether the consciousness of union officials differs from that of rank-and-file members, Bergene (2010, 72) makes the point that

> agents occupy different positions in emergent and pre-existing social structures which influence their consciousness and activities through structural conditioning. This results in a situation in which different, and in many cases antagonistic, vested interests pertain to differently positioned agents. One of the structures in which agents are immersed today is the capitalist mode of production.

The class relations that arise from the capitalist mode of production makes class one of the mechanisms that inform people's consciousness. There are, of course, other such determinants, such as nationality, ethnicity, and gender. So the trade union bureaucracy is importantly tied to how the capitalist society works, and therefore influences how the trade unions operate. Lipson, Trow and Coleman (1956) remark that – as with any large-scale organization – the trade union has a tendency to develop a bureaucratic structure. According to them, this stems from the need to mimic the structures of business and government. Mimicking these structures is thought to assist workers' desire to combat the arbitrariness and caprice of the management, while the union officials wish to secure their tenure of office. This leads to a concentration of power in the higher rungs of the union organization at the expense of the power of the rank-and-file members of the union. The ensuing concentration of power again leads to increased control of organized opposition within the union, such as through the right to suspend local officials for violating the

policies of the union. This is what Buhlungu (2010) dubs bureaucratic/oligarchic unionism, but it must be balanced against notions of union democracy. There are those union officials, most commonly pertaining to militant unionism, which plea for the empowerment of rank-and-file members, while there are those union officials who consider the tenure of office in a trade union as nothing but a career move, and thus have less solidarity with the workers the union is representing. Callinicos (1995) remarks that the bureaucracy of the trade union movement creates a social layer of fulltime trade union officials. These fulltime officials, he argues, have a material interest in confining the struggle of the working class to reforms within the capitalist system. The confinement of the class-struggle to within the limits of capitalism "presumes that the interests of labour and capital can be reconciled" (Callinicos 1995, 17). This presumed reconciliation of interests leads to a need for someone to spend their time mainly negotiating with employers on the behalf of workers, and the role of the union official which is the product of this need, inevitably removes the people who end up as union officials from the workers they are representing. This is also echoed by Michels' theory of "the iron claw of oligarchy", as he claims that "union officials adopt a 'petty-bourgeois' life-style and develop a social differentiation from the rank and file which weakens their solidarity to those they represent" (Bergene 2010, 72).

In explaining trade unionism in South Africa, however, Buhlungu (2010) identifies three different ideal-typical categories of trade union officials which serve to nuance this view. The first is the ideological unionist, which is a defender of worker control. These unionists often see the problem of giving too much power to the union leadership, as this will give the employers the means to remove union officials from the rank-and-file workers, and thus control the workers' struggles for working class power. These unionists crave efficient unions, and are therefore not necessarily happy about organizational modernization. The second category of union officials is the career unionist, which is the type of unionist that is on the way to becoming the oligarchic unionist alluded to by Lipson, Trow and Coleman (1956). They are technocrats, and are often in middle-level and expert positions. The third kind of union official is the entrepreneur. This type of union official is a person who has an instrumental and opportunistic approach to trade unionism. A strong sense of individuality underlies this type of union official's thinking. The collectivity of the union is useful only as far as it helps the individual to realize his/her own goals. Buhlungu (2010) links these entrepreneurial union officials to what he calls business

unionism, which are unions that have their own investment companies. This makes for an opportunity to fulfill personal monetary goals. Hyman (1975 in Bergene 2010, 79) also points out, in contrast to Michel, that "rank-and-file activists, who interact regularly with union officials, exercise strong influence on them in the direction of democracy".

The agenda of trade union officials, their degree of militancy, and their political beliefs, is decisive for the internal structure of the trade union, and hence its agency. Technocratic or entrepreneurial trade union officials will more likely have a compliant attitude to the management of a firm, and are more likely to assist management in cowing opposition and militancy among rank-and-file members. A docile environment is to their benefit, as this gives credence to their ability to professionally organize and run a large-scale organization. On the other hand, more radical union officials with political motives, such as a socialist society based on workers' rights, will be more interested in a less hierarchical power structure and the empowering of workers. They are more likely to be in opposition to management and encourage workers to make, and stand behind their, demands. An important point, that Bergene (2010, 81) makes, is that "it would be wrong to regard what has been termed a trade union consciousness as consciousness", since union officials seem to be drawing on "several, even contradictory, ideologies and/or interpretations in their understanding of the capital-labour relationship". This implies that contrary to Marxist theories on labor, where the divide between the working class and the capitalist class is the dominant explanatory factor in terms of labor agency, the conscious decision-making of agents such as trade union officials is equally influenced by structures such as nationality, ethnicity, and gender.

One of the concerns of trade unions is the organization of temporary workers. Temporary workers are non-full time employees that are hired for a limited period of time in order for an employer to save money on labor. Meyer and Fuchs (2010) utilize the concepts of routines, defined as "patterns of behavior and interaction that represent successful solutions to a particular problem such as the problem of attracting temps" (100); and dynamic capabilities, "usually defined as the ability of an organization to integrate, extend, enlarge, build and reconfigure internal and external competences," making them "an innovative reaction to a rapidly changing environment" (101). When using this framework on trade unions, the result is that trade unions are viewed as an organization that is capable of finding new strategies to organize temporary workers by integrating, extending, enlarging, building, and reconfiguring their knowledge of the

characteristics of temporary employment and the temporary workers' interaction with the trade union. They identify structural influences within trade unions, i.e. the general strategy towards organizing temporary workers within the trade union's executive board, which are important for the overall trade union strategy. Further, at a decentralized level of trade union activities, individual agents are the ones that make unionizing of temporary workers possible. This organizing of temporary labor is only possible with a strong organizational backing, meaning that they are "embedded in beneficial, constructive relations with their colleagues and partners" (Meyer and Fuchs 2010, 108). However, the political and economical landscape that the trade unions have to navigate works as an important structural condition that defines the nature of temporary labor, and which may either facilitate or prohibit the trade union's attempts at organizing temporary workers. When temporary labor is hired through labor market intermediaries – defined as "a bridge between employers and workers [that] attempt[s] to match labour demand with labour supply, providing a range of services to employers and to workers" (Castree et al. 2004, 258) – the trade union's adaptability and capability in unionizing temporary labor depends on the nature of the labor market intermediaries and their relations to the state and employer. As Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2011, 225) remark, the use of "outsourcing and the subcontracting of services are often the result of employers seeking to increase productivity, reduce costs and combat the power of organized labour," which often leads to a multi-dimensional fragmentation of the workforce. This implies that fragmentation is not only happening across space, but also through a network between direct and indirect employers. The fragmentizing flexibilization of the workforce also allows for the customization and individualization of contracts, such as shift-work and short-term labor relations. This all adds up to an "obstacle to building working-class solidarity, making unionism in the traditional union-shop sense less effective" (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2011, 225).

Modern trade unions more frequently benefit from international labor solidarity. International labor solidarity is not necessarily so much about the Marxian call for the workers of the world to unite in socialist revolution against capitalism anymore (Ryland 2010). As Madsen (1996, 117) says: "The collective foundations for traditional working class culture find more individual expression. The firm pattern disintegrates in favour of an apparent 'pluralism' or multiformity, in which the individual to a greater extent 'chooses' or is 'drawn' toward a life style or individual identity." When it comes to international labor solidarity, these attitudes make

a difference. The individualization of workers leads to economic interests becoming the motivation for international labor unionism, while workers who are of a collective orientation will see international labor unionism as an ideological practice. Herod (2001 in Ryland 2010) contends that, just as capital, labor also has a spatial fix, i.e. attempting to produce space that meets one's own requirements, and

> since a spatial fix is a reflection of the problem of reproduction, and since reproduction is a social and cultural as well as an economic process, it follows that different groups of workers will seek different spatial fixes that reflect their cultural and social interests (Ryland 2010, 59).

In order to overcome these differing interests, Harvey (1993 in Ryland 2010) suggests that workers must emphasize commonalities. Castree et al. (2004) point out that workers' relation to capital, having to earn a living, is one commonality, and consequently workers then have a common interest in improving the terms and conditions of how they earn a living. This interest may not be a common interest globally though, as welfare state workers may exercise a degree of self-protection (Silver and Arrighi 2001). Foreign-based trade unions and workers may not have second thoughts about giving support to trade unions and workers in the South African casino resort industry, as this industry is an example of spatially fixed capital; but would perhaps be more reserved in supporting workers' rights in other industries in the service sector, such as call support centers, which is an industry characterized by high capital mobility, and as such is in constant danger of outsourcing. Labor in one place would be reserved in supporting labor in another place, if that support might lead to the loss of their jobs. Castree et al. (2004) also contend that workers are interdependent on each other because of a reliance on each other's practices of production and consumption. This mechanism may neither be very strong in service industries where capital is characterized by a strong spatial fix, as employees in gambling and entertainment in one particular place produce little or nothing that is directly necessary for the production or consumption practices of workers elsewhere. Since there is no guarantee that individuals, especially in geographically remote places, will identify themselves as a class, "inter-place solidarity needs to be actively constructed to overcome a variety of worker identities" (Ryland 2010, 61).

Labor relations

The direct relation of labor to the employer is also an important aspect to investigate in understanding the agency of labor. The capital-labor relationship that plays out in the workplace between the employer and the union has been thoroughly investigated in the field of industrial relations, and this thesis will draw on some of that literature. Hyman (1975) has made an attempt to define the limits of industrial relations from a Marxist point of view. He points out that most experts on industrial relations see the personal interactions at the workplace as too trivial to be encompassed by industrial relations. Likewise, managerial decisions pertaining to the opening or closing of plants, or the acquisition of new technology, etc., are often considered as being outside the scope of industrial relations. This leads to a rather narrow view of industrial relations, with a hard focus on collective bargaining activities.

To arrive at a Marxist theoretical basis for industrial relations Hyman (1975) traces how industrial relations have been theorized by writers such as Dunlop and Flanders in the 1950-60s. These writers focused on the rules that govern industrial relations, be they legislation, statutory orders, trade union regulations, collective agreements, arbitration awards, social conventions, managerial decisions, etc. "The study of industrial relations […] may therefore be described as a study of the institutions of job regulations" (Flanders 1965, 10 quoted in Hyman 1975, 11). Even though these attempts at theorizing industrial relations widen the scope of the field, Hyman claims that this view of industrial relations still remains too narrow. In this view, negotiations and bargaining merely serves to retain the existing structures in industry. In order to develop a more radical approach Hyman points to the necessity of challenging the prevailing social structure.

Dunlop echoes Flanders' quote above when he claims that "[A]n industrial-relations system creates an ideology or a commonly shared body of ideas and beliefs regarding the interaction and roles of the actors which helps to bind the system together" (Dunlop 1958, 383 quoted in Hyman 1975, 12). Hyman, however, questions this rationale when pointing out that if an industrial relations system was characterized by an ideology or shared ideas there would hardly occur any conflicts at the workplace. The implications of such an approach, which Hyman terms 'one-sided' and 'inadequate', are twofold:

> First, the notion of an industrial relations system […] is of analytical value only if it incorporates the existence of *contradictory* processes and forces, and hence treats instability and stability as of equal significance as 'system outcomes'. Second, and in consequence, the definition in terms of job regulation must be broadened to take account of the *sources* as well as the *consequences* of industrial conflict. […] [I]ndustrial relations is the study of *processes of control over work relations*; and among these processes, those involving collective worker organization and action are of particular concern (Hyman 1975, 12; emphasis in original).

Hyman (1975) also warns about the potential caveat that accompanies an exclusively institutional focus on industrial relations, namely that focusing solely on the actions of negotiating committees, trade unions and the government obscures the role and agency of the individuals who between them constitute what he calls 'abstract collective identities'. He terms this mental exercise 'reification'. This plays into his argument that one cannot satisfactorily distinguish between personal and impersonal relationships. The purpose of such discrimination would be to sift personal relationships from impersonal ones, thereby establishing impersonal relationships as industrial relations. This is not possible because "in a crucial sense *all* relations in industry are personal" (Hyman 1975, 14; emphasis in original). Thus,

> the essential question is: *how far* does [a particular relationship] derive from other institutional regularities, or how far is it 'merely' personal? What is involved here is a distinction of degree rather than kind, and one which does not provide any clear-cut dividing line. (Hyman 1975, 14; emphasis in original).

The consequence of this is that "[a]ny attempt to define the precise point of time at which a 'personal relationship' becomes an 'industrial relations situation' is almost inevitably artificial and anomalous" (Hyman 1975, 15).

Relations between employer and employee are shaped by societal structures. In the present economic system contracts between employers and employees are supposedly governed by contracts which the two parties freely agree upon. However, as Hyman (1975, 23) points out, this has little relevance to the way things really are: "In practice, the ownership of capital represents concentrated economic power, a legal entitlement to dominate; hence the employer can virtually dictate the broad outlines of the employment contract." In addition, he states, the employer has the benefit of state support to protect this privilege from radical challenges from trade unions. But even though the employer has this legal right to dominate the workers in his employ he is at the same time dependent on this labor force. Because of this dependence, and the

fact that total supervision of the employees is impossible, the employer has to rely on the cooperation of his employees.

This means that there is a constant struggle for power at the workplace, which is one of the central features of industrial relations: "a frontier which is defined and redefined in a *continuous* process of pressure and counter-pressure, conflict and accommodation, overt and tacit struggle" (Hyman 197, 26; emphasis in original). Power can be regarded as both the ability to overcome opposition, and the ability to prevent opposition from arising altogether, since people who are subject to a certain type of control might not necessarily question its lawfulness or see any alternative to it. "This was apparent to Marx: he insisted that the market was a mechanism of power, but that the apparently 'impersonal' character of the price mechanism masked this fact" (Hyman 1975, 30). Hyman retains the use of the term "industrial relations", but it could be argued that this term is inadequate to capture the nature of the relations between employer and employee, as the word "industrial" connotes a relationship based on the abovementioned attempt to make a clear distinction between personal and impersonal relationships in industry. This thesis therefore makes use of the term "labor relations" instead.

Summary

The first to sub-sections of the theory are on a higher level of abstraction than the rest of the chapter. The sub-section on capital and labor is included as a backdrop to understand how capital operates, and its relation to labor. The second sub-section of this chapter, which established a dialectic view of structure and agency, shows the evolution of thinking of structure and agency from a dichotomy through to the strategic-relational approach of Bob Jessop. Even though this approach is at a high level of abstraction and has been criticized for not being able to say much practically about agency, this thesis will attempt to use this approach to understand labor agency, ameliorated by Coe and Jordhus-Lier's re-embedding which moves towards a holistic understanding of labor agency. Arguably, the dialectical understanding that Jessop postulates is the best way of thinking about structure and agency since it accepts that structure and agency cannot be separated in real life, and should therefore not be separated in representations of real life. A cue is taken from the quote from Herod (1991) above that scale is not only socially produced, but socially producing. The reasoning can be reversed, and the claim can be made that agency is not only structurally produced, but structurally producing. Just as much is lost in

translation when scales are represented graphically, as they must necessarily be represented hierarchically (symbolized either as a ladder, a web, or as concentric circles, etc.) (Herod 2011), structure and agency can neither be satisfactorily represented graphically as one is never "over" or "surrounding" the other.

After the discussion on structure and agency the labor agency of trade unions was presented. In tandem with the holistic comprehension of labor agency this thesis recognizes that the trade union is only one of many such manifestations, one which happens to be the focus of this thesis. Lastly, the chapter described labor relations in the workplace, since the workplace is the geographical focus of this thesis.

3. Research methods

This chapter explains the research process from the methods chosen prior to the fieldwork, the actual fieldwork, and the handling of the data acquired. The chapter begins with a description of the case in question, and then follows an explanation of the research methods chosen. Thirdly, the research experience is visited, explaining the interviews, the gaining of access to the field of research, and ending with a run-through of the roles of gatekeepers and key informants. Then a section on ethnography is presented, as I was fortunate to be able to conduct a coincidental ethnography fieldwork. Reflections on subject positions will be presented in the section on reflexivity and positionality, before the chapter concludes with some thoughts on the reliability and validity of the data, and the handling of the data material.

Doing field research is a learning process that, according to Sæther (2006), is characterized by trial and error, and is thus studded with uncertainty. This uncertainty leads to advantages such as being in a position to learn a great deal about what one is researching; on the other hand it leads to problems relating to access to informants, and their ability and willingness to answer accurately and truthfully. Sæther (2006, 43) calls attention to the fact that a fieldwork experience is never a linear and rational process and that actual fieldwork experiences tend to diverge from the way they are represented in chapters on methodology in theses and dissertations. My experience is no different, and this will hopefully be reflected in the ensuing pages.

The case

Research for this thesis was conducted in South Africa between May and July 2010. The thesis is a case study of the December 2009-January 2010 SACCAWU industrial action and interviews were conducted at two casino resorts, one located in a rural area of a former African homeland, or bantustan (bantustans will be explained in chapter 4), the other in an urban area in one of the major cities of the country. Qualitative interviews were conducted with representatives of the trade union and members of civil society. In addition to the interviews, a number of documents were obtained during the fieldwork. These documents have no bibliographic data (author, date, or place), and are consistently put in italics when referred to. These documents are *Aims of SACCAWU*, *SACCAWU Profile*, *SACCAWU Constitution*, *SACCAWU memorandum to the Sun International management*, as well as seventeen pages of press release dated December 2009 to

January 2010. A list of these documents can be found in Appendix 1. Additional documents given to me by anonymous benefactors include a confidential business agreements and one confidential financial report. These documents have helped inform parts of the thesis and are listed in Appendix 1. The confidential business agreement will not be referred to throughout the thesis, as it contains sensitive information that may be recognized by third parties.

The starting point for the research was my fascination with the SACCAWU members' strike action at Sun International's sumptuous resort Sun City on the edge of the Kalahari Desert in the North Western province of South Africa on December 31 2009.[2] My fascination was rooted in reading articles presenting case studies in labor geography that in an increasing fashion discounted trade unions as an important agency for labor struggle in the future, arguing that they have most likely played their part, a part that is now increasingly being played by pro-labor community organizations. This shift in focus is due to trade unions' apparent inability to cope with the changing structures of global capitalism, as international business becomes increasingly interconnected and multinational with the help of instant transnational communication. This allows for a transfer of information and capital through the use of space-compressing tools such as the Internet, together with an increasing transnational labor supply. These mechanisms are thought to render unions less capable of influencing the way capital operates. Given these trends in the literature it interested me to read about the strike action in the South African news media, as the union's efforts seemed to have been successful. The strike action was presented as a success for the trade union, and the South African trade union movement appeared potent.[3] The impression I got from the international media coverage led me to believe that this strike encompassed hotel workers at Sun City, and that it was a singular event that succeeded from the pressure it put on the company in the run-up to the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

When I arrived in the field I soon discovered that things were not exactly as I thought. The industrial action had been going on for seven weeks, between December 2009 and January 2010, and was covered by the South African media in a somewhat misguiding fashion. The media gave the impression that the strike only encompassed hotel workers, and that the strike was timed by the union so as to use the 2010 FIFA World Cup as leverage for winning through with their demands. In addition, the absence of any contextualizing and background information

[2] http://sabcnews.com, accessed 11.02.2011; http://www.iol.co.za, accessed 11.02.2011.
[3] http://www.iol.co.za, accessed 11.02.2011; http://www.eprop.co.za, accessed 11.02.2011.

on the strike action in the media served to misrepresent the scope of the strike action, both sector-wise and geographically. Judging from the media accounts the strike action was limited to the Sun City resort in North West province. In reality the strike was of a national dimension encompassing workers in a much broader section of the service industry, namely hotel workers (housemaids, cleaners, receptionists), security personnel, caterers (in cantinas and in-house catering services), transport workers, and casino personnel (dealers, pit bosses, cashiers), all employed at Sun International casino resorts around the country. In addition to the Sun City demonstration, which upon further inspection turned out to be a thoroughly planned workers' demonstration executed by the union on a national scale, attended by representatives and workers from resorts all around the country, each of the resorts and casinos owned by Sun International, save two, were engaged in local industrial action – pickets and demonstrations – led by the union on a local and shop floor scale.

Qualitative case study

For my research I chose to employ qualitative methods. There are several reasons for this. One is that I was going to study an event that had occurred in the recent past, thus it was a case without any prior research. Secondly, I was interested in seeking cultural descriptions, for which qualitative methods are best suited (Marshall and Rossman 2006). Qualitative methods are also suited to elicit multiple realities, or ways of perceiving reality. My reality as a theoretically informed, inexperienced, European researcher differs from the realities of the workers, union officials, civil society representatives and academics that I was going to be involved with in the course of my fieldwork, and theirs in turn divert from each others. Finally, qualitative methods are better equipped to develop subjective understandings and interpretations. Obtaining objective knowledge of reality has always been a goal within empiricist philosophy, a goal which has been criticized by postmodern thinkers for being unachievable within the social sciences; a critique which can easily lead to settling for purely subjective accounts of reality. This denial of the possibility of unveiling an objective reality can again lead to a submission to relativism that inhibits one's ability to say anything useful about reality, while denying that one is always subject to one's own perspective and outlook is naïve and unrealistic. Therefore I wanted to "generate[…] an account of science which socially situates it but where human interests are not opposed to objectivity. Objectivity is to be striven for but this does not mean denying the

particularities of the perspective from which our attempts at such are made" (López and Potter 2001, 12). The thesis also seeks to go in depth into the complexities and processes in the case presented. While quantitative research usually involves many cases and few aspects of these cases, investigating only the relationship between variables; qualitative research involves few cases and many aspects, where the focus is on commonalities within or between cases. Comparative research usually involves some middle position between the two (Ragin 1994). Qualitative methods are also better equipped to unravel informal and unstructured linkages and processes in organizations, such as trade unions. Also, my research reveals that the real goals of an organization is confounded by several ideologies and subject positions, and might not always cohere to the goals that are stated in formal and public media. When it comes to SACCAWU the union has a clearly stated political goal involving class consciousness and wishes for left-wing political reform, while the goals actively pursued by the union when strike action occurs are almost entirely economistic, meaning that they "lend the economic struggle itself a political character [which] means nothing more than the struggle for economic reforms" (Lenin 1970, 100-101).

When doing qualitative research it is common to do case studies (Stake 2005). There has been a tendency to define the term "case study" rather loosely. Gerring (2007, 19-20) ameliorates this tendency by picking apart several suggestions on how to properly define a case study, and defines *case study* as "the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed light on a larger class of cases (a population)," while a "*case* connotes a spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time or over some period of time." Stake (2005) identifies two different types of the singular case study, intrinsic and instrumental. Intrinsic case studies are made to get a better understanding of the specific case in question, not because the case represents other cases or illustrate particular traits or problems. The purpose of this kind of case study is not to understand abstract constructs or generic phenomena, nor is it meant for building theory. The interest is simply in the case at hand. Instrumental case study, on the other hand, is meant "to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization" (Stake 2005, 445). The case is not of primary interest, it is only interesting in its ability to better our understanding of something else. This is the kind of case study Ragin (1992 in Stake 2005) has in mind when he poses the question "What is it a case of?" There is no distinct separation between the two types of case studies, but rather they are opposite ends of a

continuum. The case that this thesis investigates is somewhat leaning towards the instrumental case study side of the continuum, as it is part of a larger class of cases, or population, namely trade unions. One of the purposes of this thesis is also to say something about the agency of labor as represented by trade unions; contributing to the advancement of the theories presented in chapter 2.

In the field

This part of the chapter gives an account of how the research was conducted in the field. Much has been written on trade unions both within labor geography (see Cumbers and Routledge 2010; Ryland 2010; Bergene 2010; Tufts 2010; Meyer and Fuchs 2010; Andrae and Beckman 2010) and outside labor geography (see Turner 1955; Lipset, Trow and Coleman 1956; Reder 1959; Weinstein 1964; Lenin 1970; Fairbrother 1984; McCarthy (ed.) 1985; Callinicos 1995). However, little research has been done on big gaming resorts within the social sciences (for a good ethnography that situates shop floor work at casinos within a national political framework, see Sallaz 2009). Of course, a lot of research has been done on trade unionism and the state of labor in South Africa (see Rachleff 2001; Wood and Psoulis 2001; Webster and Omar 2003; Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu 2007; Buhlungu, Brooks and Wood 2008), as well as South African modern history (see Lipton 1986; Davenport 1991; Johnson 2010 and Marais 2011). Thus I have had a lot of previous writing to draw on. The particular context of my research was not well represented in the literature though, so it was natural to attain knowledge about this setting through interviews in the field. To gather the information needed for analysis I chose to conduct face-to-face in-depth interviews, in addition to relying on written sources that I was able to attain while doing the fieldwork.

Interviewing

In the course of my fieldwork I did 12 interviews. Six of these interviews, of approximately one hour each, were recorded with a digital voice recorder. One of these interviews, with Jonathan Payn from the South African anarchist organization Zabalaza, was conducted outdoors at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) campus in Johannesburg on the first day of the 2010 fall semester. Unfortunately this was a windy day, and consequently parts of the recording became inaudible. Another interview, with Yvette Geyer of the Institute for Democracy in Africa

(IDASA), was also conducted outdoors on the premises of the IDASA head offices in Pretoria. This interview, however, is completely audible. These two informants did not express any wishes to be made anonymous, and for reasons of reliability (i.e. identifying the source), and since I assessed that no harm would be brought upon them from being named, I decided not to anonymized them. The remaining recorded interviews were conducted in offices, one at the head offices of SACCAWU in Johannesburg (with an anonymous trade union official), and the remaining ones in shop steward offices at the resorts (with two anonymous shop stewards and one other anonymous union representative). One of the shop stewards was also interviewed without the digital voice recorder at one point. None of the informants expressed any concerns about having their interviews recorded.

In addition to the recorded interviews, I conducted interviews that didn't allow for recording due to the need for discretion. These were interviews conducted with anonymous workers at the urban resort. Three of the workers were non-unionized cleaning personnel at the urban resort's hotel, hired through a labor broker. It was essential that the management at the resort were not aware of me conducting interviews as, due to a lack of labor rights, this would almost certainly have led to these workers being discharged from their jobs. Another three interviews were conducted with personnel hired directly by the resort. Two of these were working at the casino as pit bosses, and the third, a previous pit boss, had recently been fired due to strike activity. All of these interviews went on for approximately ten to thirty minutes.

Beforehand I had planned to conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews with all my informants. Semi-structured interviews provide readymade questions, but they are not answered in a predefined order. Structured interviews are determined by an asymmetrical relation between researcher and informant, and the informant is recapping events that reflect experiences made outside the interview situation (Thagaard 2009). A less structured interview situation allows for letting the interaction between the researcher and the informant play a more central role, where the informant creates his/her own narrative while, at the same time, the themes that are pre-defined by the researcher are covered. The narrative of the informant becomes more important in this type of interview situation, and the researcher can place checks on the informant's narrative to keep it from digressing by probing the informant as the interview goes along. Also, I chose to become less dependent on the scripted interview guide, as I experienced that it created a distance between me and the informants since I became very preoccupied with sticking to the questions,

letting avenues of interesting conversation pass me by. With the workers at the resorts, where I had little time and did not have the option of using a digital voice recorder I opted for an unstructured interview situation. The main themes were thought of beforehand, and the interviews were initiated through small-talk before the themes were gradually introduced, and the informants were allowed to divulge their own thoughts without much interference. Doing in-depth interviews require enough time for the researcher and the informant to reflect over the things that are being talked about and also getting a chance to know each other, they also allows for testing "big-picture" views (Ragin 1994).

Gaining access

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, 41) remark that

> gaining access is a thoroughly practical matter. [I]t involves drawing on intra- and inter-personal resources and strategies that we all tend to develop in dealing with everyday life. But achieving access is not merely a practical concern. Not only does its achievement depend upon theoretical understanding often disguised as 'native wit', but also the discovery of obstacles to access, and perhaps of effective means of overcoming them, itself provides insights into the social organization of the setting or the orientation of the people being researched.

Early on it proved to be difficult to obtain access to the field of research. I wanted to interview representatives from all the involved parties, the workers, the trade union, and the company. After discussing the matter with colleagues at the Society, Work and Development Institute (SWOP) at the Wits, I decided on approaching the workers and the union first. The reason for this is if I had approached the company first I would most likely have been turned away by the union, since SACCAWU is a relatively militant union in clear opposition to the company. Gaining access to the field through the company might thusly have put me in a position where I could have been perceived as a representative of the company, a potentially difficult perception to alter (Thagaard 2009), especially in view of the somewhat hostile and suspicious relations between the union and the company, a position which most likely would have limited my access to reliable information. The company interviews would have to be given less priority. I spent what felt like an unnecessary amount of time trying to get access to the trade union per email through a contact provided to me by a colleague at SWOP. After having practically given up getting access to the SACCAWU head offices, now former director of SWOP, Andries

Bezuidenhout assisted me in composing a letter of introduction containing the SWOP letterhead. I also altered my tactics in getting in contact with the union, by showing up personally and unannounced at their head offices. Navigating past the security guard proved effortless with my letter of introduction, and I was granted immediate access to the trade union, as SWOP is recognized by SACCAWU as a research institute that respects and does useful research on workers in South Africa.

The reason for my difficult time in getting access to the union might result from a combination of factors such as a general skepticism to outsiders within the union; skepticism towards my motives; and a weariness of "research tourism". In getting access to the union head offices, I was first taken to their communications advisor whose task, it soon became clear, was to assess whether or not to grant me further access. After scrutinizing my letter of introduction and questioning me extensively I was deemed trustworthy and given a list of union official's contact details. I pursued to contact each of the officials on the list, but was unsuccessful in getting interviews with all but one, even with the letter of introduction attached, and the communications adviser as reference. Some of the contacts simply did not respond, and those who did complained about illness or being overburdened with work.

Gatekeepers and key informants

In the early phases of my fieldwork I encountered several gatekeepers. According to Atkinson (1981; quoted in Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 27) gatekeepers are "actors with control over key sources and avenues of opportunity." He goes on to describe how classifying a general class of gatekeepers allows the researcher to ask questions such as

> "What resources do gatekeepers have at their disposal? […] What is the information-state of gatekeepers? For example, what sort of model of the labour market are they operating with? What views of working life do they bring to bear? How accurate are their assessments of the state of local labour markets?

Clearly employees at SWOP functioned as major gatekeepers, enabling my initial contact with the field of research. Being affiliated to SWOP provided me with the resource of being part of a research community that enjoyed respect and trust in the trade union movement. Once that contact was established, the security guard at SACCAWU house in Johannesburg proved to be a gatekeeper, as it soon became evident that email communication was an insufficient avenue for

obtaining interview appointments. The security guard referred me, and led me to the office of, the communications adviser, which then became my third gatekeeper. He began asking me a series of questions related to my research. “What is the purpose of the research?”, “For what will the findings be used?”, “What questions will I be asking?”, “Whom, in particular, would I like to talk to?” etc. After having convinced him that my intentions were not to discredit the union in any way, and that I had no hidden agenda, he produced contact information for central figures within the organization. The communications adviser’s attitude towards my research was a mix of skepticism and curiosity. The initial skepticism, his skepticism towards my intentions with the research, was quelled relatively fast. However, I sensed that he retained some skepticism towards me going through with the research, not based on my intentions, but rather on what I might uncover during my research. He warned me that I could get conflicting information and/or attitudes from different members of the union, and that I was not to put too much emphasis on any discrepancies in prospective accounts.

Even with the acceptance of the communications adviser I was only able to secure one of the union officials for interviewing. I had extensive contact with this union official through the duration of my fieldwork. He proved to be the most valuable gatekeeper once my research was getting underway, providing me with appointments with shop stewards at the resorts. The shop stewards acted as gatekeepers at the resorts in getting me interviews with workers and providing written documents.

In addition to acting as gatekeepers at the resorts, the shop stewards also became my key informants, as they provided me with the most insight into the cases I was studying, and I felt like I managed to build a trusting relationship with them. The skepticism against me and my research gradually dissipated as I moved down the hierarchy of trade union officials. While it was strong at the SACCAWU head offices, among the shop stewards it was non-existent after an initial period of some skepticism.

Some ethical considerations

All informants freely agreed to be interviewed. Everybody was informed of what the information would be used for; everybody was guaranteed anonymity if they wanted too; and everybody was guaranteed that the recordings and transcripts of the interviews would not be handed to a third

party, and that all interview materials would be maculated upon me finishing the writing of the thesis.

All workers wished to be made anonymous themselves, but not all the union representatives did. Even so, all workers and trade union representatives have been made anonymous. I judged that the three cleaning personnel employees should not be named because they were hired by a labor broker whose contact with the company seemed pretty close and in an environment of high unemployment and easy access to unskilled labor, these kinds of employees can be fired almost on a whim. Regarding the identities of the fulltime employees and the union representatives I made inquiries with the trade union's head offices as to whether these should be anonymized. The head office required of me to do so for the sake of their relations with the company management, and the same was the case for the union official that I interviewed at the head office. For this reason I have also anonymized the two resorts that I conducted interviews at as well, apart from the fact that they are identified as belonging to Sun International. The reason for this is that the shop stewards would be instantly identified were the names of the casino resorts to be divulged. The exact location of the casino resorts would have been valuable for the analysis, but I agree with Stake (2005, 459) that "the value of the best research is not likely to outweigh injury to a person exposed."

An ethnography by chance

While doing interviews I expressed my wish to the union representatives of doing interviews with workers where they live. The reason for this was to be able to talk to employees in their environment, seeing how they live and getting a better idea of who they were outside of the workplace. It would also allow for more in-depth interviewing. Due to time constraints this was not manageable. However, during my fieldwork I happened to make friends among people living in a township in the vicinity of the urban resort. This township is one of the areas from where the urban resort recruits most of its labor force. I spent some time in this township in different settings; visiting people's homes, meeting siblings, parents and neighbors; cooking food and drinking beer; playing with the kids and watching World Cup matches in homemade fan parks in people's gardens. This presented me with a unique possibility to study the local community of the people working at the casino resort, without having to dress the role of researcher. This was not something I planned for and is one of those unexpected turn of events that proves to be quite

informative. I did of course not carry out a proper ethnographic study, since no preparations were made, and since it was an unintended consequence of me simply being at the right time at the right place. My experience has been informative for the thesis, however, and it does share some of the features of an ethnographic study. People were in their everyday context, data was gathered through observation, informal conversations, and a small focus group through in-depth study, and the data revealed "meanings, functions, and consequences of human actions and institutional practices" (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 3). The data that was produced in the township gave me an insight into the reproductive sphere of the labor force and helped inform my understanding of the fragmented working class consciousness that will be explored in chapter 6.

Reflexivity and positionality

Mohammad (2001) describes reflexivity as a self-conscious, self-aware way of discovering one self, which allows for a conscious attitude to ones position in the field. Reflexivity acknowledges that the researcher is shaped by his/her socio-historical locations (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). This means that social research cannot be isolated from the wider society or from the researcher's biography. This means that knowledge cannot be based on secure foundations. It is important to understand that the presence of the researcher might influence the kind of data that is gathered, so that "we can interpret the [data] accordingly and it can provide important insights, allowing us to pursue the emerging analysis" (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Data is not revealed, it is produced.

My subject positions, without a doubt, influenced my research. As previously explained, when gaining access to the trade union I was met with skepticism. The trade union is made up almost entirely of South Africans of African descent. In the situation they were in at the time that the interviews were conducted; fighting with a company management of almost entirely European heritage, meant that they were instantly skeptical of me. They did not wholly trust that my loyalties were not with the company or at least against trade unionism in general. Of course, subject positions vary and one may find oneself representing more than one position. Ones I became associated with a research institute that they trusted I was more readily welcomed. I was also able to take advantage of my working class background when convincing them of my

intentions, which were not to put any of the union's members in a difficult position as a result of my research and that my interest in working class struggles was genuine.

The reliability of the data

Reliability refers to the data's ability to accurately reflect the actual conditions of the studied cases (Thagaard 2009). I have no reason to suspect that my informants were not being truthful in their answers. I was able to establish a confident relationship to my informants. They seemed eager to talk to me once the interview got underway and they developed a trusting relationship to me. There is however a problem with the selection of informants. As I was researching a field that is hard to gain access to, I was referred to my key informants by one union official. This union official was selected as an informant because he was accessible. This kind of sampling is known as convenience sampling. My key informants were picked out by this union official. This method of further sampling of informants is known as snowballing (Marshall and Rossman 2006). The problem with this sampling method is that the sample will become biased as it consists of people within the initial informant's network or environment (Thagaard 2009). The warning I received in the beginning of my fieldwork about possible conflicting attitudes or conflicts within the union was not encountered, and this might be the reason why. This leads me to believe that a point of saturation was probably not met. According to Ragin (1994) saturation occurs when the researcher believes that studying additional instances will not lead to the uncovering of new aspects of the case. It is usually not possible to know beforehand when saturation is reached, so it is better to interview too many, so that absolutely no new information is gathered from the informants. I would have wanted to interview several more informants, but the issues of access and time constraints did not allow me to do so.

Validity refers to the application of the research. It could be argued that the research can contribute to the developing of a holistic understanding of labor agency, as it concerns an industry that there is little research on within human geography, adding new perspectives to labor's relation to capital, as interactions within GPNs is low and the capital fix is high within the casino resort industry. This dynamic is important as it concerns most of the industries within the tourism sector of any economy.

Handling the data material

The interviews were transcribed *in vivo*, meaning that every word was transcribed accurately, as well as pauses, coughs, yawns, and the like. The recorded interviews were supplemented with field notes. The *in vivo* transcriptions and field notes form as close to an authentic rendition of the concrete situations in the field as possible. This was done so that the moods and attitudes would be easier to recollect when the fieldwork was done and I was removed from the field. After transcribing was done the interview materials were coded. The written document materials were also coded to make comparisons with the interview materials easier. The materials were given broad thematic codes at first, and as the analysis progressed more accurate codes were applied. Flexibility when applying codes to the material is necessary as the researcher's comprehension of the data material changes during the analysis (Thagaard 2009). The data were coded using a software called HyperRESEARCH that also allows for simple hypothesis testing and generating of reports to make comparisons of the data materials easier. The wording of all the anonymous informants that are quoted in the text has been altered. This is done so that their identity is preserved and so that culturally specific ways of expression that are not relevant to the reader are eliminated so that any cultural bias is not reproduced. All data material was destroyed upon the completion of the thesis.

4. Laboring for freedom – the great transformation

To understand the situation of the present-day union it is imperative to trace the history of the labor movement in South Africa. This history is inseparable from the political and economic history of South Africa, and played a key part in the anti-apartheid struggle.

Labor in South Africa…

According to Adler and Webster (1995) during the apartheid era (1948-1994) the trade union movement was dominated by white workers, and it was heavily divided along racial lines. Whereas Indians and coloreds were allowed to unionize, black workers were prohibited from holding a membership in officially recognized trade unions and had no bargaining rights. This structural reality was, according to Marais (2011), a result of the need for cheap and unskilled labor. This supply of labor was to come from a dismantled African peasantry. Coercive measures were applied to make sure that the unskilled African labor pool would stay in supply through administrative systems designed to create and uphold a racial separation between the white organized labor and the black unorganized, and unskilled, labor. These measures were also strongly and militantly lobbied for by the organized white labor, creating a political alliance between the capitalist class and white labor. During the 1960s, however, the South African economy expanded rapidly and large numbers of black workers were needed to fill the void that colored, Indian and white workers were unable to fill. The growing black workforce, suffering under both a harsh industrial relations regime and a set habit of racist oppression, began to sow the seeds of a collective action that would eventually be instrumental in toppling the apartheid regime.

During the early 1970s the white trade union movement was waning and a growing African worker militancy began to emerge (Adler and Webster 1995). So-called independent unions sprouted up, mostly in the Durban area, assisted by white intellectuals and former union officials (Wood 2001). The year 1973 was a turning point, as a spontaneous strike wave occurred, predominantly in the Durban area (Donnelly and Dunn 2006).

> "Until 1979, South Africa had a dualistic structure of industrial relations: a legalistic formal guarantee of certain industrial rights to White, Colored, and Indian workers through the 1924 Industrial Conciliation Act from 1982, the labor and a repressive labor

> regime for African workers resting since 1953 on the Black Labour Relations Act, or LRA" (Adler and Webster 1995, 78).

In 1979, under the presidency of Pieter Willem Botha, the Wiehahn Commission deracialized the country's systems for bargaining and dispute resolution, did away with racial distinctions when it came to union membership, and legalized and protected the independent African trade unions (Davenport 1991; Wood 2001).

This act of benevolence on part of the Botha government may be construed as a sincere wish to strive for a more racially equal society, but on the other hand, in "classic industrial relations terms, this move might be characterized as an attempt to incorporate non-white unions into the formal system and thus institutionalize conflict (i.e. sanitize it into limited, manageable trade disputes)" (Donnelly and Dunn 2006, 7). The obvious intention behind an incorporation strategy is to tame trade unions by giving their leaders status within the established system so that they use their power resources to restrain militants among their membership. The risk is that, in attempting to bestow new powers upon these leaders, the state fails to quell radical aspirations, but rather fuels them.

> So, the legal reforms of the early 1980s did manage to bring non-white employment relations to the fore in South Africa at the expense of the interests of white workers, but the reciprocal quiescence did not materialize. The attack on apartheid merely became more ferocious" (Bendix 1996, 100 quoted in Donnelly and Dunn 2006, 7).

This strategy may have failed when applied by the apartheid regime, but arguably this strategy was also co-opted by the post-apartheid government of national unity (GNU) led by the African National Congress (ANC), and it had a more profound effect in the hands of a non-racial government. This leads to the question of whether the labor-driven anti-apartheid struggle actually was a class-conscious labor movement or a populist movement (von Holdt 2002).

Nelson Mandela was elected and inaugurated as the new president of South Africa during April/May 1994 (Adler and Webster 1995). The black labor movement was deeply involved in the overthrowing of the apartheid regime, and the installing of the ANC-led GNU. The ANC's election manifesto in 1994 was basically the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The RDP was originally what Johnson (2010) calls a COSATU "wish list" written up in an attempt to give a "left-wing slant to the ANC's programme" (Johnson 2010, 52), who's main

campaign poster was "Vote ANC: Jobs, Jobs, Jobs" (Johnson 2010, 52). But even though the black labor movement played an important part in the abolishing of a racially oppressive regime, they soon became victims of political power play once in a government alliance. Mandela proclaimed on the eve of the election that the RDP would be given financial priority, even if this meant cutting the defense spending. But this was not going to be the case. Like so many other of Mandela's plans for the new government, it was thwarted by Thabo Mbeki, the second president of the new South Africa. Mbeki, a racial nationalist, was a business friendly politician who managed to get into a position of such power that he was in actuality pulling the reins even under Mandela's presidency. He was one of the main enthusiasts for the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy that replaced the RDP in June 1996, who's

> key elements […] were budget-deficit reduction, greater labour flexibility, accelerated privatization, a monetary policy aimed at lowering inflation and preventing further depreciation of the rand, the gradual relaxation of exchange controls, tariff reduction and the moderating of wage demands (Johnson 2010, 76).

The GEAR policy led to a business friendly environment in modern South Africa, where the accumulation of capital has precedence over workers' rights and security. There is a high degree of outsourcing, and a diverse variety of labor intermediaries are allowed to exploit the cheap and abundant labor available in the country.

When the new government was established, the co-optation of trade union leaders into political parties began, leading to a brain drain from the trade union movement, even the government partner COSATU, to the ruling political parties, the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP). The people who had led the anti-apartheid struggle and used their leadership skills to promote the trade union movement and workers' rights, were now being replaced by leaders of insufficient abilities, leading to a weakening of the trade union movement. The co-optation of trade union leaders into the ruling political parties also becomes a way for the new capitalist democracy to, wittingly or unwittingly, control and suppress labor, as the racially exploited South African working class puts its trust in the newly elected democratic government to represent its interests, while at the same time the distance between trade union activism and a position in the bodies of the government appears short.

…and labor in the bantustans

The bantustans were a decentralization scheme designed by the apartheid government. Its purpose was to keep the black population in "native reserves". The 1913 Land Act denied Africans land outside these reserves, which made up 7.3% of the South African land mass; while the 1936 Natives Land and Trust Act doubled the land given to Africans in an attempt to veer the lack of even minimum subsistence requirements in the bantustans (Marais 2011). The South African labor legislation was shaped by the advent of the bantustans. According to Keenan (1988), while labor legislation in the 1980s was "relatively reformist" in South Africa in general, the labor legislation in the bantustans was becoming repressive. This was made possible by the bantustans' "independence" which allowed them enact their own legislations. The reason for this repressive labor legislation, according to Keenan, was to discourage activities from the South African trade unions in the bantustans, and this legislation was enacted through "mechanisms of control and repression" (Keenan 1988, 146). While new labor acts were being pushed in South Africa in the 1980s, like the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1983, in the bantustans the old acts of the 1940s-1960s were still being enforced. One of the reason for the failure to repeal these antiquated labor acts by the bantustan authorities was the Shops and Offices Act which made exemptions in the hotel and entertainment industry, allowing the big gambling resorts to "engage in labour practices which would have been outlawed in South Africa itself" (Keenan 1988, 147). This complete disregard for the more enlightened labor acts of the 1980s allowed capitalists to invest in the bantustans, which provided a "cheap, readily available and oppressed labour force" (Keenan 1988, 149). Keenan goes on to state that the primary function of the bantustans was, historically, economic. They were there to "reproduce a cheap supply of labour power" (1988, 152). Only later did the bantustans become a political project underscoring the ideology of separate development for white and black South Africans.

The cost of reproducing the cheap, unorganized, labor was also kept to the peripheries by "measures such as the pass law system [which] regulated the flow of labour into the cities" (Marais 2011, 10). The pass law system denied African workers the right to live in the urban centers even if they were working there, being forced to vacate the cities to the peripheries at the end of the working day. This, to all intents and purposes, meant that the bantustans were subsidizing South Africa's capitalist growth.

The casino resort industry

During the apartheid era, gambling was illegal in South Africa, but legal in the so-called independent bantustans. Due to this, there were no casinos in the heavily populated urban areas of the country until after the fall of the apartheid regime, and the ANC's succession to power, bringing with it a much more liberal gambling legislation. Thus, all the urban South African casinos were established subsequent to the transition to the government of national unity in 1994. Gambling in the bantustans was allowed during the apartheid era, though, the reason being that the bantustans were becoming incapable of taking care of themselves. When the bantustans became economically destitute in the 1960s, which led to an inability to sustain a viable agriculture, the apartheid state apparatus saw it as necessary to create incentives for private businesses to invest in the bantustans. At this point 60 per cent of the population that was supposed to be residing in the bantustans was in fact living in squatter camps surrounding the major urban areas of South Africa (Sallaz 2009). In an attempt to quell this migratory trend, the apartheid regime allowed gambling in the bantustans, in the hope of creating workplaces for the bantustan population, and thereby keeping them out of the "white" South Africa. The money, and therefore the investments, was in the hands of white South Africans, like the casino mogul Sol Kerzner. Any value created by the bantustan casinos was kept by white South Africans, while the African population was a source of cheap labor.

5. The industrial action – origins, demands and outcomes

The background for the seven week long industrial action between December 2009 and January 2010 was twofold. The first issue was the union's demands for a shop steward at a resort that did not have one, and the second issue was demands for better wages and working conditions. Both issues will be covered in this chapter after a short presentation of Sun International Limited, SACCAWU, and the South African state's labor regulating apparatus.

Sun International

Sun International is a multimillion dollar company. Its primary industry is casinos and gambling, and it owns resorts in South Africa, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, and Swaziland (Confidential financial report 2010). In addition to its resorts in Southern Africa, it has also opened a franchise in Chile. Recently the building of a new casino in Haiti was afflicted by the 2010 earthquake and never came to fruition (Interview with anonymous union official 2, June 15 2010). The company employs about 10 738 workers ranging from hotel workers (housemaids, cleaners, receptionists, etc.), security personnel, caterers (in cantinas and in-house catering services) and transport workers, to casino personnel (dealers, pit bosses, cashiers, etc.). The company has had a 19 per cent employment growth between 2008 and 2010 (Sun International 2010), and has during the same period had a 6 per cent growth in total annual revenue from R7,501 million in 2008 to R7,998 million in 2010 (approximately US$945 million in 2008 to US$1016 million in 2010) (Confidential business report 2010).

The company was founded by South African hotel magnate Sol Kerzner in 1983 (Johnson 2010, Confidential financial report 2010). Prior to the founding of Sun International, Kerzner had built several hotels in South Africa since establishing the country's first five-star hotel in 1964. The founding of Sun International in 1983 came about as Kerzner decided to concentrate on gambling resorts instead of the hotel industry.[4] Several of the resorts that are a part of Sun International today were built by Kerzner right after the end of the apartheid era. One of them is the "extraordinary architectural monstrosity of Disneyesque bad taste" (Johnson 2010, 14) named Lost City. Lost City is located in the bantustan of Bophuthatswana and is part of Sun

[4] http://www.referenceforbusiness.com, accessed 26.10.11.

City which Kerzner opened on December 7 1979.[5] Many such gambling resorts were built in the bantustans, and Kerzner had made a fortune in the bantustans during the apartheid era. Kerzner was used to getting his way with the bantustan authorities, and when the ANC came to power Kerzner managed to keep his business going the same way. He was aware that the apartheid regime would fail, and as a consequence, he began pouring money into the ANC. He bought the goodwill of the ANC through corruption such as, allegedly, paying for the lavish fiftieth birthday of Thabo Mbeki, the man who would become president after Nelson Mandela, and who was holding many of the government reins already under the Mandela presidency. However, this throwing of money at the ANC was just a way to keep them preoccupied while Kerzner was moving his money and selling his businesses, preparing to vacate South Africa, as many business-men did (Johnson 2010). Kerzner attempted to open casinos in the US and UK, but federal authorities were alerted to the corrupt nature of bantustan business, and hence the nature of Kerzner's business, and his operations were shut down or denied.

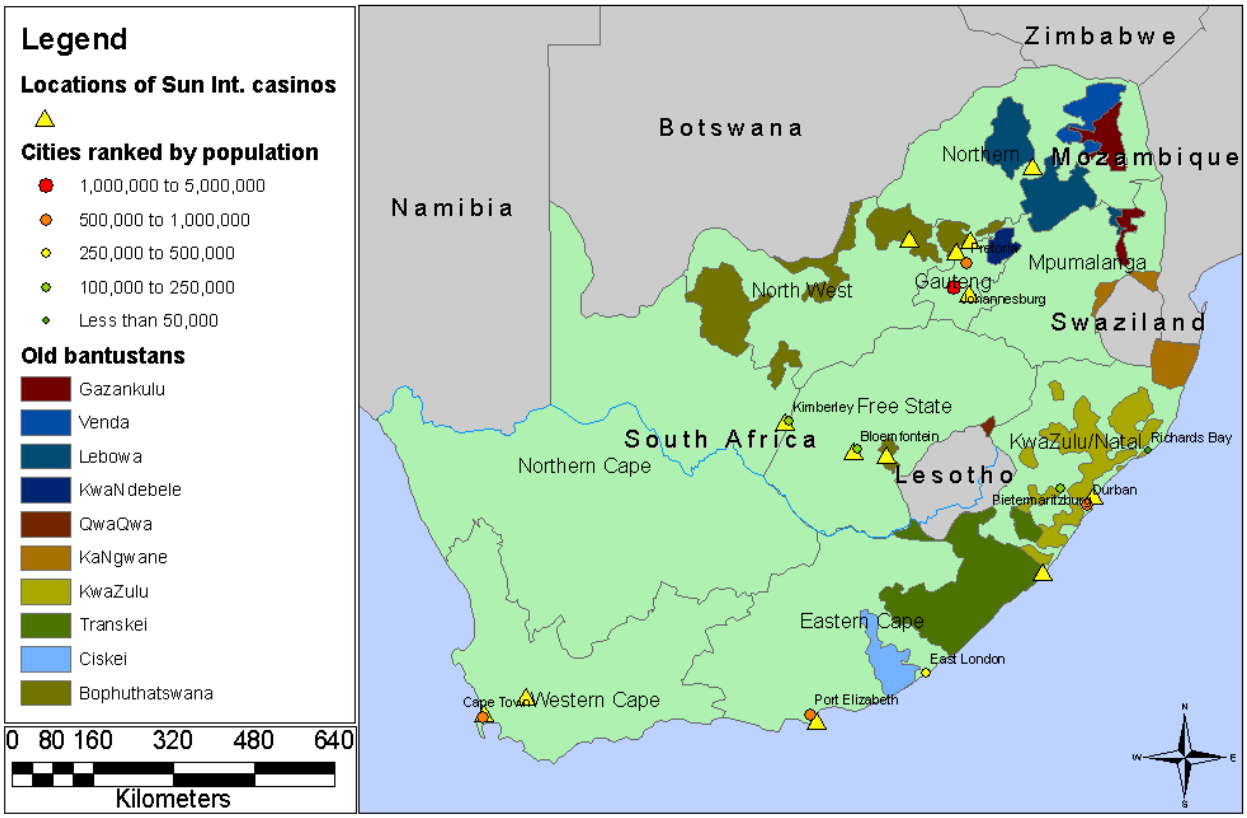
Meanwhile, in the newly liberated South Africa, the ANC elite were quite impressed by Kerzner and his exuberant lifestyle of gambling and women. The allure of the casinos was growing, and "one of the greatest objects of commercial excitement (and corruption) in the new South Africa was the allocation of casino licenses" (Johnson 2010, 17). (See map 1 for locations of Sun International casinos in South Africa.) Johnson (2010, 17) goes on to remark that

> the ANC had interpreted liberation to mean that such casinos, with their inevitable penumbra of crime and prostitution, instead of being confined to a few remote bantustans, could now be based in every major city. The result was that the new South Africa, having abolished all the old bantustans, itself came to exhibit many of the features of a giant bantustan.

The current chief executive director (CEO) of Sun International has been an executive director since Sol Kerzner sold the company in 1996. In addition to the CEO there is also a chief financial officer (CFO). In addition to these two executive directors there are eleven non-executive directors in Sun International Limited, and the Sun International management has 16 members. The Sun International directorate is comprised of nine men and four women. Of the male members eight are white and none are African, three of the women are African. Of the 16 members of management 14 are males and two are females. Twelve of the male members of

[5] http://www.gautenghappenings.co.za, accessed 08.06.11.

management are white, while one is African; one of the females are African, and none are white (Sun International Annual Report 2010). This adds up to a total of 27 directors and managers (not 29, since the CEO and the CFO are both directors and managers). These numbers reveal a bias in the gender and racial composition of the board of directors and the management. In the board of directors 69 per cent are men, of which 89 per cent are white and none are African. In management 88 per cent are men, of which 86 per cent are white and 7 per cent are African. In total this amounts to 78 per cent men and only 11 per cent women. 69 per cent of all board members and managers are white men and only 17 per cent of all board members and managers are African. The fact that the Sun International management and board consists of mainly white middle aged men is a source of some friction between the company and trade union, as SACCAWU's officials, representatives and members are almost exclusively of African ancestry. Even though the racial issue seems to add an additional dimension to the conflicting relations between the company and the trade union, it is difficult to assess how much animosity it amounts to. Only few and careful remarks will be made on this issue.



Map 1 Locations of Sun International casinos and the old bantustans. Sources: Sun International (http://www.suninternational.com) and University of Texas Libraries (http://www.lib.utexas.edu).

South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union

According to the *SACCAWU profile* SACCAWU was founded in 1975 as the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA). The union represents workers in private service sectors, including commercial services (wholesale, distributive and retail), catering, tourism, hospitality and financial sectors (such as bank, assurance and insurance). At the national level SACCAWU is affiliated with COSATU. COSATU in 1985, the result of four years of unity discussions between several anti-apartheid unions; and in 1989 SACCAWU was born out of a merger between CCAWUSA, Cape Liquor and Catering, Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union (HARWU), and Retail and Allied Workers Union (RAWU). According to the COSATU web-page COSATU represented fewer than half a million workers in 33 unions, while today they represent approximately two million workers in 1985.[6] Finding statistics of the number of unionized workers in South Africa is challenging, and estimates vary

[6] http://cosatu.org.za, accessed 26.10.11.

quite a bit. As for SACCAWU, their membership numbers increased from 56.000 in 1987 to 118.417 in 1999, according to Naidoo (1999 in Buhlungu 2010), while according to COSATU (2006 in Buhlungu 2010) their membership rose from approximately 97.000 in 1991 to approximately 108.000 in 2006. Despite the variations in the numbers, both sources' numbers show only a small, or no, growth in membership since the mid-1990s. According to the *SACCAWU profile* the union has a membership of a little more than 107.000, but no date is provided. In addition to its affiliation with COSATU, SACCAWU is also affiliated with two global union federations, the Union Network International (UNI) and the International Union of Food Workers (IUF). For the 2009-2010 industrial action SACCAWU also got support from the biggest union in Britain and Ireland, the Unite the Union (UU), as well as the online news service LabourStart, whose aim is to serve the international trade union movement by collecting and disseminating information, and by assisting unions in campaigning.[7] SACCAWU represents an almost exclusively African workforce, and the union's official representatives are also almost exclusively African. In addition, according to the *SACCAWU profile*, most of the union's members are women leading to a conscious engagement in gender emancipation and equality struggles. The union boasts of having been able to negotiate parental and children's rights at shop floor level, as well as achieving parental rights agreements with most of the companies in which they have worker representation.

The union has a somewhat complex organizational structure, but it is important to understand how it works in order to understand what scope of action the union delegates have. According to the *SACCAWU constitution*, the union consists of four levels of organization: the shop floor, local, regional, and national levels. The shop floor level of the organization consists of a shop stewards committee (SSC) comprising all shop stewards in each workplace. The stewards are elected by the union members at each workplace, and are mandated with leading and representing workers at their workplace. The SSC is instructed to have regular meetings amongst themselves and with the workers at least once a month. In each city or town there shall be a local shop stewards council (LSC). The LSC consists of all shop stewards pertaining to workplaces in those cities or towns. The LSC is in charge of electing local office bearers from the local executive committee (LEC) for three year terms. Four local office bearers are elected and, together with six shop stewards, these form an LEC which is tasked with running the

[7] http://www.labourstart.org, accessed 03.11.11.

union's local affairs. The LEC meets at least once a month, while in addition the local office bearers meet with each other once a week. At the regional level there is a regional congress (RC) of shop stewards. An RC consists of at least one shop steward delegate per 100 union members at the local level. The RCs meets tri-annually, and amongst its duties is the election of regional office bearers. The regional office bearers, together with local delegates, form the regional general council (RGC), which convene once every 18 months. Lastly, at the regional level, there is a regional executive committee (REC). A REC is composed of the chairperson of each LEC, which is a local office bearer elected by the LSC. The RECs are responsible for the day-to-day administration and control of their region. The national level consists of five bodies. The national congress (NC), which is made up of delegates from each region, is elected from each LEC, and is considered the supreme governing body of the union. Each delegate in the NC represents 500 local union members each. The NC convenes every three years and elects national office bearers for three year terms. National office bearers have several functions. They may be included in a national working committee (NWC) together with ten other members elected by the NC. The NWC serves as a supporting body to the national office bearers and meet bi-monthly. They are part of a central committee (CC) together with regional delegates, which deals with policy matters. There is also a central executive committee (CEC) which consists of four delegates from each REC, as well as regional and national office bearers, and departmental heads. The CEC meets every six months and is responsible for the control of the union. Finally, there is the national executive committee (NEC) which is made up of national office bearers, one office bearer from each of the RECs and the head office departmental heads. (See figure 1 for an organizational map of SACCAWU.)

At each level of organization there is a clear chain of responsibility. The LEC is subject to control by the LSC; the REC is subject to control by the RGC which is subject to the control of the RC; and all national bodies are subject to control by the NC. All delegates and representatives in all committees, councils and congresses at all levels must be shop stewards at their place of work. Interestingly, both the RC and the NC is made up of shop stewards, and all shop stewards in both congresses are elected from the local level. This means that the supreme controlling bodies at each geographical scale are made up of delegates and representatives elected at the local scale (city or town). Since they are elected by shop stewards at every place of work – shop stewards that are elected by the workers that hold a membership in the union – the

workplace as a scale becomes very important in deciding who manages the union's affairs at every scale. Since every member "of good standing" in the union are entitled "to stand for election for any position they are entitled to stand for in terms of this constitution" (*SACCAWU constitution*) the entry barriers to positions at all scales are relatively low. This flat organizational structure fits well with the union's aims. According to *Aims of SACCAWU* one of the aims of the union is to build a democratic, just, non-racial, and non-sexist society free of all forms of exploitation and oppression. In addition the union also aims to struggle for the abolition of the capitalist system and for the establishment of a classless society. In addition to these long-term political aims the union is also concerned with more hands-on short-term objectives. While some strategies towards the long-term political aims are sketched out – like the promotion of, or opposition to, laws and administrative measures that will affect workers' interests; work towards one single federation of trade unions in order to unite and represent all workers in South Africa; and to promote working class unity and organization – the more short-term objectives include regulating relations between members and employers to protect and further the interests of the union's members; to build a strong and active shop stewards' movement; to improve wages and working conditions; the resisting of retrenchments, fighting for full employment, and job security; the setting up of an effective collective bargaining machinery; and in general do other lawful things that appear to be in the interest of the members of the union. The organizational structure of SACCAWU situates the union within a democratic trade union model. Even if the there are many segments of organization, SACCAWU utilizes a flat power structure with a soft hierarchy. The distance between shop-floor members and shop stewards is short, and shop-floor members are well represented in all levels of the organization through democratically elected shop stewards. This means that the union representatives and officials are influenced by their shop-floor members and the distance between union representatives and company management is larger. This is exemplified by the fact that when a shop steward accepted a vacation by the Sun International management during the 2009-2010 industrial action in an attempt to by his/her loyalty and weaken the strength of the SACCAWU bargaining unit, (s)he was immediately suspended from his/her duty in the union (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010).

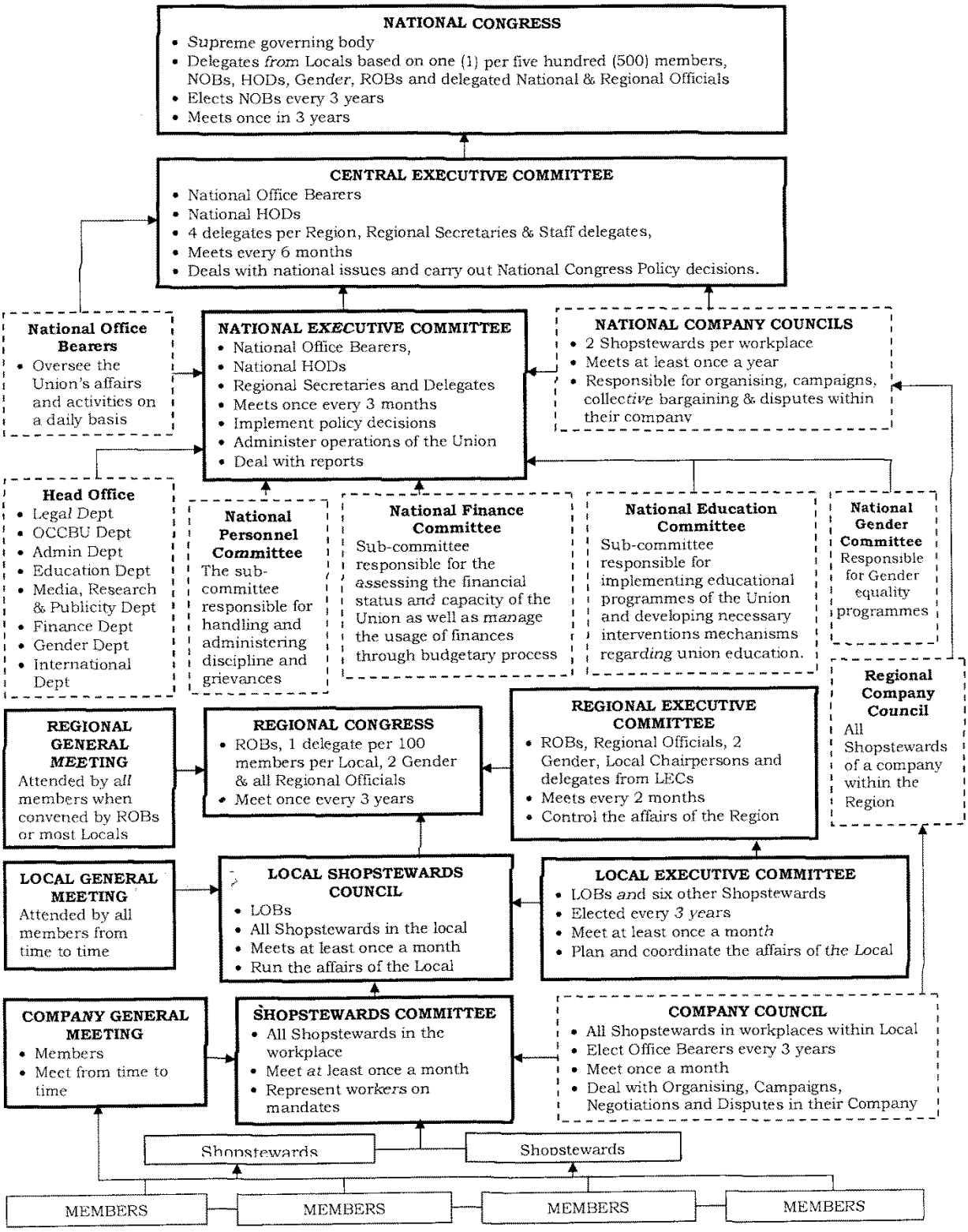


Figure 1 Organizational map of SACCAWU

Two categories of conflicting objectives can be discerned from this run-through of the union's objectives: (1) the political goals and (2) the economic goals. SACCAWU is one of the most politically radical trade unions within the COSATU. The union's ideals are that of a radical socialist transformation of society into a class free socialist state with equal rights for all and the abolition of the capitalist system. Their strategy for achieving this goal, working towards one federation of trade unions to represent all workers in South Africa, is in line with Callinicos' (1995) claims that in order to stop the capitalist machinery, workers really have only one option, namely the collective withdrawal of labor.

Labor-regulating institutions

There are several labor-regulating bodies in South Africa. This section defines the ones that are directly relevant for this study.

Many of the unions in South Africa are represented in bargaining councils. A bargaining council is a council consisting of representatives from the industry and trade unions (Roman 2011). There are bargaining councils on all scales from the local to the national in most industries in South Africa.[8] Workers in restaurants and catering are covered by bargaining councils, but only in the Witwatersrand region and Pretoria. No South African gambling personnel are covered by a bargaining council.

All trade unions in South Africa may however present their case to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), which is an independent dispute resolution body. It does not belong to, and is not controlled by, any political party, trade union or business.[9] The CCMA has replaced the Industrial Court and conciliates workplace disputes and arbitrates disputes that are not resolved after conciliation has ended. It also facilitates the establishment of workplace forums and statutory councils, as well as considers applications for accreditation and subsidy from bargaining councils and private agencies. The CCMA only acts as an adviser on labor disputes, and does not have the authority to make rulings. In addition to its role as a mediator between business and trade unions it may give training and advice on the establishment of collective bargaining structures, workplace restructuring, consultation processes, the termination of employment, employment equity programs, and dispute prevention.

[8] http://www.labourprotect.co.za, accessed 16.11.11.
[9] http://www.ccma.org.za, access 16.11.11.

Even if the CCMA is meant to be unbiased in its mediations, this is not always the case. Some CCMA commissioners attempt to remain unbiased in their mediations, and some tend to rule in favor of the trade unions. However, the union is skeptical to the credibility of the CCMA, as the commissioners that are appointed to the disputes that are received by the CCMA may let economic interests govern their counseling. As the CCMA also delivers the abovementioned training and advices, they are being used by business as an agency also outside of labor disputes. This means that commissioners in the CCMA are being paid by business to provide these services, and as such these commissioners have an interest in ruling in favor of private business interests. As it is not possible to tell which commissioner is appointed to the disputes that the CCMA receives, the union tries to avoid the use of commissioners in matters of labor disputes (Anonymous union official, June 1 2010). Any issues that remain unresolved after mediation by the CCMA may be referred to the Labour Court or the Labour Appeals Court. The courts are located in Braamfontein, Gauteng and have status as specialist high courts, meaning that their penal jurisdiction is unlimited in cases where a minimum or maximum sentence is not prescribed by law. [10] Their rulings are final. The next two section of this chapter present the industrial action of 2009-2010.

First issue: Shop steward

The company felt that a joint shop steward was adequate to accommodate the needs of workers at the three different resorts in the Free State (see map 1). The union did not agree, and demanded separate shop stewards for these resorts. This issue was the catalyst for the industrial action that was to occur in December 2009. Negotiations became deadlocked and the union agreed to a compromise. They would accept having just one shop steward for two of the resorts that were a 45 minute drive apart, but kept their demand for a shop steward at the third resort, the Windmill unit in Bloemfontein (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010). The company still would not engage the union and the union threatened with industrial action. The threatened industrial action would coincide with the June 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup, which the company was anticipating to profit from. The FIFA Confederations Cup is the trial run for the FIFA World Cup, testing a country's ability to host the world's biggest soccer championship. The participating teams are

[10] http://www.justice.gov.za and http://www.info.gov.za, accessed 16.11.11.

> the current World Cup champion, the new host country, and the winners of each of the six Fifa confederation championships - ie the reigning African, Asian, European, Oceanian, South American and Concacaf (North and Central America and the Caribbean) champions.[11]

In 2009 this meant that Egypt, Iraq, Spain, New Zealand, Brazil, USA, Italy and South Africa would be the participating teams. With prize money of US$17.6 million[12] and an anticipated big crowd turnout, it is FIFA's second biggest sporting event globally, and a big potential source of income for casino resorts. When the company realized that the strike action might have negative impacts for the Confederations Cup they gave way to the union's demands without opposition, to insert a shop steward at one of these resorts. This meant that the issue

> never went on strike, because there was a Confederations Cup during that time, and they didn't want us to ruin that. So they decided to give us whatever we needed with the first certificate. So it was consent, the company agreed to everything we demanded (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010).

So the 2010 FIFA World Cup was never intended to be used as leverage over the company, as explained in chapter 3, but rather the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup was, and it had the effect that the union desired as the union was able to win through with its demands with relatively little opposition from the company. This illustrates that major sporting events can indeed be a useful tool for workers to put pressure on employers. In this case the company felt it could not run the risk of industrial action in fear of not profiting in the short-term from the immediate income and in the long-term from an impaired reputation. There is a spatial issue at work here. As Harvey (2006) pointed out when theorizing around the circulation of capital, the physical fix of capital renders it vulnerable to devaluation due to, e.g., the collapse of markets. Within the casino resort industry, and other tourism industries, the physical location of capital is the very commodity that is being produced. When the commodity is fixed in place and the market must bring itself to the site of production, physical location becomes important for other reasons than cheap labor. Of course, being in proximity to natural resources are of little concern to casino resorts.

[11] http://www.southafrica.info, accessed 30.10.11.
[12] http://www.southafrica.info, accessed 30.10.11.

Two concerns are especially important. One is the proximity to suppliers of fresh produce for the restaurants and employee cantinas. This point will not be elaborated on here, but it certainly plays into the locational decisions of where to place the casino resorts, as the resorts rely on regional and local distribution chains, and get their raw materials, such as fresh food produce for restaurants and cantinas from their immediate economic centers (i.e. Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, etc.) (Anonymous union representative 2, June 25 2010). The other important concern is the distance to the market. A casino resort's location in relation to the distance of the market can be said to be determined by (1) how far people are willing to travel, and how easy it is to get there; and (2) the size of the domestic market in close proximity to the resort. These concerns come together in the locational concerns of casino resorts since the mid-1990s. Locating resorts in low income townships surrounding the major cities in the country was clearly advantageous for several reasons. First of all, these casino resorts are right on top of the labor market. There is a lot of unemployment in the townships, and this is especially true for the African female populace, which is the most common type of employee in the casino resorts. Historical data on official unemployment rates from Statistics South Africa shows that unemployment among African women aged 15-64 years grew from 30.1 per cent in 2001 to 33.2 per cent in 2007 nationally (Statistics South Africa 2008). The same statistics show that almost all other sex and population groups (African, colored, Indian/Asian and white males; and Indian/Asian and white females) in the South African labor market experienced decreasing unemployment rates. The only other group in the labor market that showed an increase in unemployment was colored women, however slight. Also, as will be demonstrated below, high population density coupled with high unemployment may serve as a check on the workforce, limiting worker militantism. The structural reality of the workforce is coupled with the fact that the workers are not very dependent on transport to get to work, making the cost of labor very low in these urban areas.

Concerning how far people are willing to travel is compounded by several factors. One of these is the fact that South African casino resort industry does not attract many visitors globally for the sake of gambling. Yet South Africa is the eight largest casino industry in the world in terms of revenue, after the US, Canada, the UK, France, Germany, Macau and Australia (Business Monitor International 2010), and the number of casinos in South Africa dwarfs that of other Southern African countries (FAFT/OECD and APG 2009).Even so, people from other parts

of the world are unlikely to travel to South Africa mainly for the sake of the casino resorts. This means that Sun International is dependent on its most valued guests (MVGs) for steady gambling revenue, and the MVGs are the local market (Sun International 2010). This means that it is clearly advantageous to be located in, or close to, major centers of population.

The reason for the company's lenience with the first demand of the union was likely due to the anticipated rise in income from the upcoming FIFA Confederations Cup. The expected rise in income would not primarily come from gambling, but from accommodation at the resorts' hotels. Having workers picketing at the resorts during the cup would look bad to guests coming from countries such as Brazil, Spain, Italy and the US. This would mean that guests might not be given ample service and probably would not stay at the resorts' hotels during the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Statistics from Statistics South Africa confirms the anticipated increase in tourism during the FIFA World Cup. Total number of stay units (any accommodation, such as hotel rooms and rooms at guest houses) were 12.5 per cent higher during the time of the FIFA World Cup compared to a year later. Also, the total income from accommodation was 30 per cent higher during the FIFA World Cup compared to a year later (Statistics South Africa 2011).

The union was well aware of the strategic advantages the 2009 Confederations Cup offered, and was equally aware how big the strategic advantage the 2010 World Cup would have been. However, the union representatives had a mutual interest with the company to ensure that no conflicts would ruin the running of the World Cup. A strong sense of national image-building made sure that the union did not want to hamper operations during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, as one union representative explains:

> Because when we plan the strike we're not looking at what will happen to the company. We're looking at what will happen to the country. Yes, going on a strike would hamper the company hard, but what would happen to the country, the image of the country? Believe me, I would love going on a strike during the World Cup. But at the same time I'm trying to look at what image I would be projecting to the rest of the world about the country itself (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010).

But, even if the pressure on the company would have been a lot higher if the union initiated industrial action that collided with the country's hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the industrial action in December 2009-January 2010 was already making an impact on the hotel reservations for the cup:

> We had a lot of cancellations at our hotels. People who didn't want to have anything to do with Sun International as long as they believed that it treated its employees in a bad way. They wanted out, so we had a lot of cancellations, which put pressure on the company to sign in January, because people were booking with the competition now (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010).

Projecting a favorable image of the country to the rest of the world was not the only reason for not striking during the 2010 FIFA World Cup though. Fear of reprisal from the company after the end of the event also played a role:

> Some of the employees were actually saying: we could call the strike off, and then go on strike during the actual World Cup. Believe me, I would love going on a strike during the World Cup. Probably the strike would only last for a week or three days, because the company would be quick to say: "yes, please come back". [But] as much as I want to fight management I still want to work. So I don't want to help the company so much that they end up having replacements after the strike.

The issue of fear of reprisals from the company will be elaborated on later, as the geographical differences between the urban and the rural casino resort is analyzed. The industrial action did have an impact on the company's income from the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The company had an 84 per cent increase in income from rooms revenue during the World Cup, but at the same time had a 2 per cent decrease in gaming revenue for the same period, confirming that the income from the World Cup would come mainly from accommodation (Sun International 2010). However, the occupancies were not as "buoyant" as expected due to a substantial amount of last-minute cancellations. FIFA's accommodation agency, MATCH Services AG, canceled its reservations with Sun International. The reasons for the cancellations are not clear, but pressure from SACCAWU and its international allies on FIFA and the Sun International management during the industrial action might have played a role. LabourStart and the IUF both initiated and campaigned petitions that saw more than a thousand letters of protest delivered to the Sun International management from benefactors across the globe. The impact of international solidarity will be discussed more fully later.

Second issue: Wages and working conditions

The second issue that the union had with the company was a general dismay with the wages and working conditions of the employees, and was the issue that eventually led to the industrial action. The company has a steady increase in profits each year. According to Sun International's annual report of 2011 the company had a 164 per cent increase in total comprehensive income from R201 million (approximately US$25 million) in 2009 to R531 million (approximately US$66 million) in 2010 (Sun International 2010). The union's shop stewards were getting tired of seeing the company's increasing profits not benefiting the workers, who were not getting any increase in salary. At the time the union started pressing for their second set of claims, however, the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup was well underway, and the company

> kept stalling and saying, 'OK, let's have a meeting and we will have something for you'. And every meeting we went to nothing happened until it got to December, and then we said: 'No more'. Now we are tired of the company's stalling tactics. We are going out on a strike" (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010).

The company probably used stalling tactics in the negotiations in order to hold off any potential industrial action until the Confederations Cup was over. Managing this, they kept stalling, perhaps realizing that they could get away with it not having to accommodate the union's demands. This second round of deadlocked negotiations that led up to the industrial action was fueled by several demands by the trade union. According to SACCAWU press releases the demands were: (1) a wage increase of 13 per cent across the board effective from July 1 2010; (2) the unconditional allocation of all tips to the workers who receive them; (3) a night shift allowance of R7 (approximately US$0.9) per hour; (4) an end to the practice of the averaging of working hours; (5) insurance of a nine-to-one ratio of core employees to scheduled employees; (6) an end to labor broking and the use of interns that undercut working conditions and wages; and (7) an extension of the scope of the bargaining unit.

Wage increases

Demands one through three are the wage related demands. The first of these demands was a wage increase of 13 per cent across the board. According to the union's press releases and two union representatives (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010; Anonymous union

representative 2, June 25 2010) the minimum annual wage that Sun International employees were getting prior to the demand for increases in wages from the union was R66 479 (approximately US$8300). An increase of 13 per cent would mean that the minimum salary would amount to R75 121.27 (approximately US$9400). According to the 2005 Final Social Accounting Matrix, published by Statistics South Africa (2010), an income of R66 479 is between the 71st and 80th national income percentile. Even though an income R66 479 would be slightly less in 2010 than in 2005, considering that this is the minimum pay, Sun International employees are fairly well off economically compared to the majority of South Africans. The hike in annual wages that a 13 per cent increase would amount to would still leave these employees in the 71st to 80th national income percentile. The company and the union settled on a compromise and the employees were to be given an 8.75 per cent across the board increase effective from July 1 2009, with any payback due to be paid the employees no later than January 31 2010.

In addition to this, the union was able to negotiate a second year wage increase of 1.75 per cent plus the average of the consumer price index (CPI) as published by Statistics South Africa for the period of July 1 2009 to April 30 2010. However, the workers were guaranteed a second year wage increase of 7.75 per cent, so that if the 1.75 per cent increase plus the average CPI would become less than this, the workers would still be getting a 7.75 per cent increase.

Tips

The second wage related demand concerns the customers tipping of the employees at the resorts. Customers frequently tip employees like parking valets, dealers, and other workers who service the customers. The company policy, however, is that any tips given to workers are considered company money. Even if a customer wins money at a casino on, e.g., slot machines (which is the most common form of gambling at the casinos) and that customer decides to tip a waiter or a dealer, or any other employee with parts of the winnings, the company considers that money to belong to the company, not the worker who received it (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010). Sallaz (2009, 76) also experienced this practice in his stint as a dealer at a South African casino while doing ethnographic research: “Dealers may accept but not keep tips; any gratuities given to or played for us go directly into the ‘drop box’ (i.e., to the casino’s coffers)”. The workers felt that this was an unfair practice and started refusing tips from the customers. The company responded to the workers’ refusals to accept tips by charging the workers a fine when

they were discovered not accepting tips (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010). The allocation of tips to the workers was a demand that the company refused to accept. The issue deadlocked. The company kept on wanting to fine the workers who refused tips after the industrial action was over, and the union insisted that if the company would not allow the workers the tips that were given to them, then tipping should be discouraged. The end result was to not allow workers to accept tips. This was one of the major issues that the union was fighting for during the industrial action, but the union realized that this issue would have to be left out of the demands (Anonymous union representative 3, June 25, 2010). However, the issue is considered so important by the union that they are willing to resort to industrial action at a later date only to remake this claim. Some even considered going on industrial action during the 2010 FIFA World Cup over the tips alone (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010). The issue was left unresolved.

Night shift allowance

The third issue on the agenda was the unions demand for an increase in the night shift allowance. The union demanded a total night shift allowance of R7 (approximately US$0.9) per hour from the then current night shift allowance of R2.30 (approximately US$0.3) per hour. The company agreed to an increase in the night shift allowance of R0.70 to a total of R3 (approximately US$0.4) per hour (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010).

Averaging of working hours

The fourth issue, the averaging of working hours, is an issue that cuts across the wage issues and the working conditions issues. The company makes wage payments to the core employees ones a month according to how many hours they are supposed to work (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010). A shop steward may be contracted for 187 hours per month, and this is what (s)he will be paid for, no matter how much overtime (s)he might put in during any given month. If this employee has to work 200 hours one month, the company will still only pay the fixed amount for 187 hours of work. The extra hours may then be given as time off later, as the company sees fit, “even if you don’t want to” (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010). In other companies in the South African economy the averaging of hours implies that if an employee works overtime one month, the company gets an exemption from paying the

overtime the month that the overtime was put in, but has to pay it in later months. How long the overtime payment can be withheld depends upon the conditions of the labor contract. Some contracts state that the overtime must be paid in full the following month, others that it must be paid in full within two or four months, etc. The union considers the practice of giving time off at the company's convenience a misuse of the practice of averaging of hours. This issue was left unresolved. Another part of the averaging of working hours is the extra payment for Sundays and holidays, which was also left unresolved (Anonymous union representative 3, July 25 2010). The company refused to give way to overtime payment demands and an end to the practice of averaging of hours. This issue (along with the tips) is something the union will also be pursuing in the future (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010; Anonymous union representative 3, July 25 2010).

Ratio of core employees to scheduled employees

The fifth issue is a matter of working conditions. The union demands a nine-to-one ration of core employees to scheduled employees. As previously mentioned, Sun International has 10 738 employees. Of these, 7 913 are core employees and 2 825 are scheduled employees (Sun International 2010). This roughly amounts to an 8-to-3 ratio of core employees to scheduled employees. Both core employees and scheduled employees are permanent staff. The difference between them is that the core employees have a fixed salary, while the scheduled employees are paid by the hour.

> The scheduled workers are used for flexibility reasons. They need to have someone they can call in depending on the business levels. The core employees are here all throughout the month and get seven days off per month. They are the ones that get affected by the averaging of hours. They get hundred and eighty seven hours a month, no overtime, nothing. The scheduled workers they get paid for whatever hours they work, regardless. If you've worked three hundred hours, you get paid three hundred hours. But it's not overtime; it's not calculated as overtime (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010).

The union also managed to negotiate a 100 hours per month guaranteed work time for the scheduled employees. The issue of core employees to scheduled employees is actually being followed through by the company without the union demanding it. Between 2008 and 2010 Sun International has hired 2060 new employees (Sun International 2010). Of the 8678 employees in

2008, 5826 were core employees while 2852 were scheduled employees. This roughly amounts to a ratio of eight-to-two of core employees to scheduled employees. Even though there is only a slight shift in the ratio of core employees to scheduled employees and the absolute number of scheduled workers have dropped insignificantly as well (from 2852 to 2825) in two years; the shift of scheduled employees to core employees amounts to just a little more than the number of new employees over the same time span. The company says it is looking into the issue (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010).

Labor broking

The sixth issue is perhaps the most difficult issue the union is trying to fight, namely a ban on labor broking and the use of interns. The use of labor brokers hides a huge number of unrecorded workers at the casino resorts. Many of the tasks at the casino resorts are outsourced to other companies. This includes such areas as catering, cleaning, security, etc. The companies that are responsible for these tasks make widespread use of labor brokers when hiring people. These labor brokers can be small companies that operate out of private homes, and as such they can easily avoid the union's attempts to contact them (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010), or they are owned by former Sun International managers (Anonymous union representative 2, June 25 2010). The union's demands to ban labor brokers fell on deaf ears with the company. The company argues that the parts of the operations that are outsourced are not of the company's concern, and therefore the company can do nothing with the issue of labor broking. The gambling staff at the casinos, however, cannot be outsourced or hired through labor brokers because the casinos require licenses from the National Gambling Board to operate. According to the National Gambling Act of 2004, these licenses require that trained and authorized personnel operate and supervise the gambling activities, which in effect mean that the people who work in the gambling department must be employed directly by the company (Government Gazette 2004). However, Sun International has sold some of these licenses to labor brokers in order to cut expenditures on labor (Anonymous union representative 2, June 25 2010). This is not happening at all the resorts, and in this case the urban resort's gambling personnel are all employees of Sun International. That is not the case at the rural resort where several of the gambling personnel were hired through labor brokers. When the union discovered that the company was selling licenses to labor brokers, they involved as many of the gambling personnel

at the rural casino resort in the industrial action as they managed to, and as a consequence they were given employment contracts with Sun International. There are still gambling personnel left that are hired through labor brokers, and the union is negotiating a transfer of all gambling personnel at the rural casino resort to the company. As for the workers that are employed by labor brokers in the outsourced parts of the resorts' operations they are nearly impossible to unionize. The reason for this is that if the workers that are hired by labor brokers are discovered engaging with union representatives by the company management, they will be fired. An example of this practice was given by one of the union representatives when talking about workers in one of the restaurants that were hired through a labor broker:

> I was called to the restaurant and there were thirty names posted on a wall. It was on a Friday. And these people were told on that Friday morning that if their names were on the wall they did not have to come back on Monday. That is how they dismiss people. And if a manager of Sun International walks by and suddenly sees something wrong, or a person he dislikes, he just tells the labor broker: 'I don't have to see this person here tomorrow.' And just like that the job is ended. That is the impact the labor brokers have on the companies. That's why we don't want them. We have tried recruiting their workers but everybody that we recruited was dismissed (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010).

Bargaining unit

The seventh issue that the union demanded from the company was an extension of the bargaining unit. The bargaining unit is made up of a group of employees that are mandated to enter into collective bargaining with the company management. When the union's demands were made workers holding supervisory positions, such as pit bosses, table supervisors and slot supervisors, were not allowed to be part of the bargaining unit. Even if the pit bosses' and supervisors' tasks are simply supervising the shop floor and reporting to management, meaning they have no real authority over the shop floor, the company considers them to be holding management positions. Therefore the company argues that allowing workers holding such supervisory positions to be part of the bargaining unit would lead to a serious conflict of interest between the company and the union.

6. Analyzing the industrial action – the trade union as labor agency

This chapter provides an analysis of the industrial action. It begins with an analysis of the role that mega events play on the agency of the trade union, in this case the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup and the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Then follows an analysis of why the issues that the union put forth, leading up to the industrial action of 2009-2010, were won or lost. Most attention is given to the issues of wages, averaging of working hours and labor broking. The last part of the analysis focuses on the way that geographical differences influence the agency of the trade union.

The role of mega events on the actions of the trade union

The negotiations between SACCAWU and Sun International wee all the way shot through with power struggles and processes of control over work relations. As pointed out by Hyman (1975) above, labor relations are only of analytical value if the existence of contradictory processes and forces are incorporated. In addition, he pointed out that the sources of industrial conflict must also be taken into account. The source of both the threatened industrial action in mid-2009 and the actual industrial action during the Christmas holiday of 2009-2010 in this case, is a result of the very processes of control over work relations that Hyman refers to. Not granting their employees the potential for full representation by the trade union by denying the trade union shop stewards at several resorts, is an example of the economic power that accompanies the ownership of capital. Not only can the company dictate the broad outlines of their employment contracts, but the legal entitlement to dominate the workforce that comes with their ownership of capital also makes it possible for the company to dictate the level of representation that their employees enjoy. If one, like Hyman, regards power as both the ability to overcome opposition and as the prevention of opposition from ever arising, it can be argued that the company's power lay in their ability to deny their employees representation by the trade union and thereby making sure they remain abstract collective identities without the necessary agency to engage in collective action that the trade union can grant them.

Labor relations is continually defined and redefined through a process of pressure and counter-pressure (Hyman 1975). The union's power is in its ability to prevent employers'

opposition to its organization. SACCAWU can do this through the democratic nature of the South African constitution and the Labour Relations Act of 1995 which gives every employee the right "to join a trade union, subject to [the trade union's] constitution [and] to participate in [the trade union's] lawful activities" (Government Gazette 1995, 12). In this case it amounts to putting pressure on the company by making demands for a shop steward, and engaging in negotiations. The company can then apply counter-pressure by stalling the negotiations. In this case the response from the union was to threaten with industrial action. As will now be explained, this counter-pressure from the union was successful due to what Jessop (2001) calls emergent structures.

When the company realized that an industrial action was going to become the outcome of the deadlocked negotiations they gave way to the union's demands for a shop steward at the Windmill unit in Bloemfontein. Using the strategic-relational approach, it is possible to say something about the impact that so-called mega events such as global sporting or cultural events can have on the agency of trade unions. The 2009 Confederations Cup can be seen as an emergent structure, a structurally inscribed strategic selectivity, as the event would lead to changes in the composition of the casino resort's clientele, anticipating an influx of customers from all around the world. The anticipated shift in income, both in the short run and in the possible long run, for the company allowed the trade union to make a structurally oriented strategic calculation that would not have been possible had it not been for the imminent mega event.

This is even truer for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, as it would become the biggest event ever hosted on the African continent, but the trade union paid attention to other considerations in its decision not to engage in industrial action during the World Cup. The reason for not initiating an industrial action during the World Cup, as the union representative quoted on page 57 explained, was due to the fact that the union did not want to give the world a negative impression of the country. Even if the union is a radical proponent of a socialist anti-capitalist society, it did not attempt to use this mega event as leverage over the company. From strategic-relational point of view this implies two things. First of all the trade union finds it in the interest of the union and the workers it represents not to engage in workplace unrest during the World Cup. This is because of a fear of discouraging visitors to South Africa, and also a fear of being sanctioned by the company in the form of dismissals after the end of the industrial action. This first point

implies a second point, namely an unspoken acceptance of the capitalist system. Attracting visitors means attracting foreign capital which holds a hope of increased employment and living standards. The context sensitive decision by the trade union not to engage in industrial action during the World Cup was structured by national pride, but the decision is in its own way structuring as it tacitly enforces and legitimates the rationale of the capitalist system. The application of the strategic-relational approach means that one has to examine how structures privilege certain actors, strategies, and actions over others. In this case, the Confederations Cup worked to the trade union's advantage, most likely because the event was not so big that the union considered it damaging to the national image that it would like to portray to the world. The World Cup however was an event of such a magnitude that it constituted a strategic shift for the trade union, and thus it ended up privileging the capitalist system. As Callinicos (1995) pointed out, improvements in working class living standards are more likely to be accomplished in a rich and expanding economy, thus making it easier to control the working class. This shows that the scale of mega events can have differing effects on trade union agency.

Why the union won some and lost some

The economical demands that the union put forward can be seen as both extreme and reasonable. A wage increase of 13 per cent does seem like an unrealistic demand. It is extreme, not necessarily in the sense that it is asking too much of the employer, but in the sense that the employer almost certainly will not accommodate the demand. The union probably knows that it is asking for a higher wage increase than the company is willing to grant them, as they know that the company will keep counter-pressuring them in order to make the increase as little as possible. The last time that the union resorted to industrial action against the company was in 2006, and since then the employees have not even received remuneration increases in keeping with the CPI (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010). This means that the company probably accepted that it would not get away from the union's demands for wage increases and increase in the night shift allowances. The union representatives seemed pleased with the agreed-upon increase of 8.75 per cent for the first year and 7.75 per cent for the second year. They talked of the industrial action as a success in terms of their economic demands. But even if the union managed to get the increases in remuneration and night shift allowance on paper, this did not mean that the employees would receive them the way they were meant to.

According to the agreement signed between the company and the union the remuneration increase and the night shift allowance increase would be backdated to July 1 2009, and to be paid to the employees no later than January 31 2010. As of June 2010 only some of the employees had received their increases, and most of the ones that had received them, had not received them in full, but only 8 per cent (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010; Anonymous union representative 2, June 25 2010). The reason for this is that the company has reinterpreted a clause in the agreement, which only provides employees over a certain cutoff-point the negotiated wage increases. The union has referred the matter to the CCMA since all talks with the company has stalled, and the appointed commissioner from the CCMA is advising the company to give in to the union's demands in this case, as the commissioner upholds that the company's interpretation of the clause is faulty. The company has refused to listen to the council of the CCMA, and as of late June 2010 the parties were waiting for a date for arbitration by the CCMA. The company manages to stall the wage dispute even after an agreement has been reached due to the fact that the CCMA cannot make binding rulings in matters of labor dispute. Even in this case, when it is not a matter of corruption (or at least dubious economic relations) between the council and private business, the CCMA cannot effectively rule on behalf of the union even if it supports it.

The demand that the company cease using labor brokers as an employment strategy was not something that the company was willing to discuss. SACCAWU is adamant about its resolve to ban labor broking in South Africa. SACCAWU is pressuring companies to stop using labor brokers, as well as attempting to instigate changes in the law in order to make labor brokers in South Africa illegal (Anonymous union official, June 1 2010). As Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2010) remarked, employers seek increased productivity, reduced costs, and to combat organized labor. As the company will always seek flexible and cheap labor that is easily available, it is unrealistic to think that this practice will be made away with by the company. The union cannot reach the labor brokers either, as any attempt to engage their employees results in those employees' being fired. The labor brokers themselves are difficult to locate, as they are often small firms run from private homes (Anonymous union official, June 1 2010). The battle for the ban on labor broking is being fought by the union on a political scale as well, attempting to ban the practice from the country through their connections with the ruling political parties. A ban on labor broking seems to be far away though, but even so it does not seem like the appropriate strategy to fight this issue with private companies.

As Meyer and Fuchs (2010) pointed out above, and as was commented upon in the section on labor broking in chapter 5, the union representatives at the shop-floor are the ones that actively engage temporary employees in an effort to unionize them. However, as the labor brokers that hire these employees are as good as impossible to identify and reach, the union is unable to adjust to the changed structural reality of hiring practices that comes with the use of these labor market intermediaries. Even if the structural influences within the trade union, i.e. the union's executive board's general strategy towards unionizing temporary workers, provides a strong overall union strategy towards this goal, the structural selectivities of the South African state benefits the capitalist system's want for cheap labor. SACCAWU are one of few trade unions in South Africa that actively attempts to fight labor broking on a political level, and the possibility for success seems elusive.

The geographical context of the workplace

Geography influenced the industrial action in two broad ways. In a vertical sense the union was able to draw on labor solidarity by utilizing several geographical scales, and in a horizontal sense the industrial action played out differently in the two workplaces due to historically conditioned differences between them. The implications of these geographical realities will now be analyzed.

The scales of casino resort capitalism and labor agency

For the workers in the casino resort industry in South Africa Bergene's (2007) argument that a need for a higher scale solidarity is needed to counteract the scale jumping of multinational corporations is not applicable for the simple reason that the casino resorts are not run by multinational corporations. This means that a higher labor solidarity is potentially more powerful, as it is not an answer to a problem, but an independent and advantageous strategy. The problem of fixed capital that Harvey (2006) refers to is more than a problem for the casino resorts. It is a necessity. Within the casino resort industry, and other tourism industries, the physical location is the very commodity that is being produced. Any physically mobile commodity production has the advantage of outsourcing parts, or all, of the operation to geographically distant areas, but the casino resort industry is dependent on the market coming to the site of production. When the market has to bring itself to the commodity it is easier for the consumers to choose not to buy the commodity, since it requires higher expenses in the form of

having to travel to the commodity, as well as the time and effort that has to be invested. This might explain why casino resorts have a tendency to be extravagant. There must be something extraordinary in store for people to go there. The more extraordinary, the more people buy it. The consequence of this need to re-invent the site of production means that capital which is freed for circulation in large part is re-invested in the physical location of the casino resorts. The company also spends a lot of money on marketing and MVG programs. These programs are a way to attract permanent customers. Even if South Africa is the eighth biggest casino industry in the world in terms of revenue (FATF/OECD and APG 2009) it cannot, as mentioned, rely on foreign capital for its operations. This means that Sun International is dependent on its MVGs for steady gambling revenue, and the MVGs are the local market (Sun International 2010). The production of place that is so necessary for the casino resorts' existence means that Harvey's (2006) argument that the capital flight that occurs due to the devaluation of production facilities and the undermining of the built environment is not a locational worry for labor in this industry in the way it is in industries that face potential deindustrialization.

The trade union utilized several geographical scales during the industrial action to put pressure on the company. On the scale of the workplace they managed to get sympathy from the MVGs. During the big march at Sun City the customers were met by the picketing workers from the trade union at the gates of the establishment. Many customers chose not to enter the establishment and left.

> The customers were mad at the management, saying 'we will not come back again because we do not want to pay these people tips when they go to the management. How can these people be so cruel?' (Anonymous union representative 3, June 25 2010).

This was serious for the management, as they rely on their regular customers, and by evoking sympathy from the customers the union was able to obtain symbolic power by attracting sympathy from some of the MVGs.

Also, to some extent, the local communities were involved in the strike action. Castree (2000) explains how the local community during the 1995-1998 Liverpool dock dispute raised money for the dockers' struggle. Something similar was happening at the picketing at the rural casino in this case.

> When we were striking we went to the local shops to ask for rations. They gave us rations so that we could continue with our strike, because the last week we didn't have any money, any lunch. I remember that our local restaurant also offered us lunch (Anonymous union representative 3, June 25 2010).

At the big march at Sun City the local communities in the surrounding areas even joined the protesting workers. "There were a lot of people. Everybody came and sympathized with us" (Anonymous union representative 3, June 25 2010). The local village chiefs were also involved in the big march at Sun City. "The nearby villager leaders were sending people, and also coming themselves, to give us support" (Anonymous union representative 3, June 25 2010). According to the union official the management respects the tribal chiefs because

> they do have a certain level of an influence, because some of the Sun International hotels or casinos are built on tribal land. Therefore, at the end of the lease in terms of a particular tribal land the chief can tell them to vacate, and so the chiefs do have a certain degree of influence (Anonymous union official, June 1 2010).

At the picketing at the urban casino, the local community was a little less active. The union did get support from a local women's organization that came and assisted with moral support during the strike (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010). Even though churches are usually involved with trade union affairs at the workplace and in the local communities, letting the union address their congregations, they were not active during this industrial action (Anonymous union official, June 1 2010). According to Yvette Geyer (July 14 2010), prior to 1994 and the liberation from the apartheid regime

> civil society organizations were interested in the broader liberation issue, but when liberation came there was a dispersement of agendas. And so, everybody began to focus on their own bottom line objective. And so, then, I think there was also an assumption that the new government would be worker friendly.

This coupled with high levels of unemployment means that

> if you have community based organizations working in townships, or in informal settlements, or in rural areas, often the people they work with are the unemployed, not the working class. So there may not be a natural space for coalition with the trade unions, as it were. So what happens is you get occasional cycles of mobilization around issues.

The lack of long-term engagement with labor from the local community might also result from the fact that the COSATU trade unions are in a tripartite alliance with the ruling parties ANC and SACP. This implies that if a community organization should find itself in a legal dispute with the trade union coalition, it would in effect be in a legal dispute with the government. Community organizations that are fighting for societal changes may therefore steer clear of trade unions, as the trade unions are too close to the governmental structures potentially being fought against. This point is echoed by Jonathan Payn, who works with an anarchist organization called Zabalaza. Zabalaza's interaction with trade union's consist mainly of political educational training programs, and basic journalism and layout training, but they

> experience that there is no room to maneuver in the more conservative unions, and it's also more in line with our sort of political strategy to try to develop and radicalize those already more left leaning or radical unions, and more independent unions (Jonathan Payn, July 12 2010).

Also, community organizations are not as powerful as they were under the apartheid regime because

> when we had the new government people who were leaders or rising stars in civil society organizations got co-opted into government because we needed to fill government with talents. And, so, civil society took a serious knock with lots of its people going into government and many people beginning to see civil society organizations as a step towards a post in government. I can certainly say that the really strong coalition formations that existed prior to 1994 are gone and we have in no way gotten back to that hay day of the coalition activism in this country that we used to have (Yvette Geyer, July 14 2010).

This brain-drain tendency is also the case for the trade union movement, as was noted earlier.

On a regional and national scale the industrial action was supported by COSATU and the SACP. The SACP was actively involved in the industrial action, as on e union official explains:

> On the national level, SACP assisted us. From the ANC only the Youth League spoke about it, but they didn't really do much to assist us. SACP assisted us a lot. They came to the picket lines and helped us and they were there during the marches (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010).

The SACP is historically a radical party that based their practical politics on the communist ideals of Eastern Europe. The radical communist fraction, however, is diminishing within the party ranks, and the party no longer has much of an active electorate. The historical social radicalism though, might explain why they are more active in supporting trade unions than the ANC are. As Payn (July 12, 2010) explains:

> I know there is a lot of dissent, though, within SACP around the alliance, and that infighting might have led it into a bit of inaction. But I think historically the SACP would be more in support of the unions than the ANC and draw across membership.

The radical socialist forces are not only disappearing from the SACP, but also from the other partners of the tripartite coalition.

> Anyone, even within the trade union movement, that raises dissent towards the alliance and so on is likely to get purged. There have been huge purges of comrades in the SACP and COSATU over the years as more and more people, I think, are growing aware of the fact that the ANC is not living up to the mandate that was expected from it. And that's the weakness of COSATU, as well, that the people who are controlling the ideological development, the political development, of the union are conservative (Jonathan Payn, July 12 2010).

COSATU reveals the importance of a strong umbrella organization for the South African trade unions. They are able to mobilize much larger around single issues than the union can do alone, and they are able to create scales of labor agency much easier than the single trade union is capable of. When an industrial action deadlocks COSATU can decide to take action. In this case

> COSATU played a very vital role because if the strike continues and the two parties, the union and the company, do not seem to be getting any closer to a resolution, the federation comes in to assist. First, they try to contact the company. If the company is unwilling to talk to them, then they go to the media. So COSATU mostly assists in getting all the other unions within the federation to give support and they assist also in getting all the unions of the world to give support. And that is where COSATU played a very vital role in helping us (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010).

The fact that COSATU went to the media is perceived as important for the industrial action by the trade union, since

> the company will do anything it possibly can to hide the strike from the public. So this helped us to publicize the strike, making sure that the community knew, so they could support us (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010).

Not only did the TV reports get the attention of South African citizens but also of FIFA officials.

> The media is a good thing, because if the media is here everybody can see what our working conditions are like. FIFA, where are they? The hotel is so dead now a days. Because they said, we are paying a lot of money, but people are not being helped here (Anonymous union representative 3, June 25 2010).

While the industrial action of 2009-2010 was considered a success by one union representative, the industrial action of 2006 that was alluded to above was not (Anonymous union representative 3, June 25 2010). The union representative claims that the reason the 2009-2010 industrial action was more of a success than the 2006 industrial action was because COSATU were involved, and COSATU made statements on national television.

> I remember one day they were interviewing people on TV, the local secretary of COSATU and the regional secretary of COSATU. You know why we think the media was here? Because we involved COSATU. In 2006 we never involved COSATU in our strikes.

Not only did COSATU bring news of the industrial action to South Africans through televised media, it also engaged its international allies.

Through LabourStart, UIF, UNI, and the British-Irish UU, amongst several others, COSATU was able to initiate petitions that generated a steady stream of e-mails to Sun International. They also petitioned MVGs to send e-mails to the Sun International CEO asking the company to meet SACCAWU's demands (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010; Anonymous union representative 2, June 25 2010). LabourStart also initiated an online campaign that was signed by people from around the world and sent to Sun International. One union representative believed that the union would have been able to get their demands met without the international solidarity, but that

> it would have taken us longer. So foreign unions applying pressure made it easier for us to reach the agreement in a shorter period. To compare this strike with the 2006 one, the 2006 strike lasted three and a half months, and this one only lasted one and a half, or two

> months. So we strongly believe that it was through the help of these other unions that the strike did not last longer than it did (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010).

Pressure was also put on FIFA, as a formal letter was addressed to the South African World Cup committee and as international unions and labor organizations were advising guests not to stay at Sun International's hotels during the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The international labor solidarity can in this case be explained as a class-based sympathy that was not being hampered by differing interests. The spatial fix of the South African casino resort workers made it possible for SACCAWU with the help of COSATU to gain sympathy for their strike abroad as it was a matter of class solidarity. No self-protection was required by geographically distant workers as there was no chance of workers in the same sector in other countries being negatively affected by potentially strengthening the South African workers. As Ryland (2010) pointed out, this kind of class conscious solidarity is not guaranteed, and it needs to be actively constructed to override other worker identities.

The historical impact on geography

During the research it was uncovered through interviews that the strike action and union-company interaction at all the casinos and gaming resorts was similar. All the resorts' union representatives (shop stewards) arranged strike action at their respective sites, and those who could afford the money and time off participated at the big national demonstration/strike action that took place at Sun City. There are, however, a few interesting regional differences in the way the strike action played out, the way the company and the authorities responded to the strike action in progress, and the consequences of the strike action for the workers and the union representatives. In the following passages it will be made clear why Katz's (2001) claim that cultural forms and practices, which are geographically and historically, specific are important for the production and reproduction of the labor force.

The economic structures that were put in place by the apartheid bantustan politics created large squatter settlements around the country's largest population centers. These informal living arrangements has stayed on, gradually becoming formalized, and today large segments of the population live in the so-called low-income townships in the major cities. These townships can be socio-economically diverse, but the unemployment is generally high and living standards are varying. Locating resorts in low income townships surrounding the major cities in the country

was clearly advantageous for several reasons. As mentioned above, these advantages include close proximity to the labor market, high population density with high unemployment rates, and easy access to the desired labor market segment (African women with little or no formal education). As Massey (1995) pointed out, the reason why women are attractive to the employer is the idea that they are more easily controlled since they have to accustom themselves to the masculinity and sexism that has carried over from the old division of labor. Another reason why women are attractive is due to the reproductive aspects of the labor force. As pointed out by Mitchell (2005), capital circulates differently through the hands of women than men. Many women in these townships have the sole responsibility in raising their families, which became clear during the micro-ethnography mentioned above. For the women of the townships working at the casino resorts this implies that a lot of the money is spent on housing, and food, clothing and schooling for children. This makes them vulnerable to job losses, and as such they may be easier to control. Also, the uneven development of capitalism is reflected in the two casino resorts, as the labor relations between the two differ due to the structural circumstances of their locations. As the quote by Massey (1995) on page 10 stated, it is important to both understand the general underlying causes of capitalist society and at the same time appreciate the importance of the specific and the unique.

During the micro-ethnography mentioned in the chapter on research methods I was able to engage many of the people that live in these areas, and experience the diverse socio-economic conditions of these townships. As the urban casino resort is located in one of these townships many of the people who live there are employed at the casino resort. During a short walk in such a township, one can experience seeing BMWs parked outside one house, while the neighboring house has a portable toilet in the front yard. Other parts of the townships are more homogenously poor, with houses made of metal sheeting and loosely assembled bricks. There is not much reminiscent of a conscious working class in these areas. Even though the communities are strongly tied together socially, people live individualized lives and working class politics are absent from their daily lives. Everyone has dreams of a better material life and individual prosperity. As Geyer (July 14 2010) remarked:

> Now, in South Africa, what might happen is that people will leave the ghetto. They will go live in the suburbs and then they will pop by the ghetto every Sunday with their BMW and hang out there, show who they have become and then go back. So I think that's a

> very clear manifestation of people thinking: 'I wanna still pretend I'm working class, but actually I want the comforts of all of this stuff, and all I do is go in and go out. I don't make any substantive contribution to the lived structural reality of those people.'

This trend can be thought of as the capitalist society's check on mass opposition from working class consciousness:

> So you co-opt as many people as you can into the middle class strata, because then they will not care about class issues. The only class issue they will care about is how they can get to the top of the class structure. They will not care about the bottom part of the class structure at all. Who wants to look backwards when he can go forwards? Who wants to worry about whether people have water or sanitation when, actually, what you are really striving for is to drink more Chandon on a Sunday at the golf club?

This is in consistent with Madsen's (1996) assertion, which was mentioned in the chapter on theory, that the collective foundations for traditional working class culture find more individual expression.

These circumstances have an impact on the militancy of the trade union at the urban casino resort. Here the workers and the union representatives were less militant than at the rural casino. According to the shop steward the strike action was peaceful, consisting of a march from the main entrance on the resorts grounds that came to a halt at the casino's main doors, where a pledge was held and the striker's demands were read out to the management. The company did not utilize

> lockout troops. During the strike there was no lockout by the company. There were no picketing rules set between us and the company. And, yes, we removed ourselves, because we were only marching to come and deliver a message and then move out. So we chose to picket by the entrance to the casino (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2011).

The shop steward also upheld that the management responded to the strike action by giving those who were still working

> double pay for working during a strike. It didn't matter if it was a holiday or whatever; just for working during the strike they were getting double pay. And they were giving them telephones to call us and tell us what they were getting so that we would be enticed to come back to work (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010).

Another strategy utilized by the company in an attempt to hamper the strike at the urban resort was racial and sexual slur, and mild physical abuse. “The security manager was the one doing all the dirty work for the company, sending dogs and insults and stuff like that” (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010). The South African Police Service (SAPS) also assisted the company during the strike action. A union representative recalls that

> the police came here while we were marching on this road here. And then this one police officer, a white guy, comes to us after talking to the security manager and he says to us: ’I’ve just been instructed to remove all the “kaffers” [a derogatory term for people of African and “mixed” racial descent] from the premises’. And we were surprised. The confusion was whether he was saying this because he was told to, or if he is saying this because he likes calling people “kaffers”. Or was he saying this to pass a message for us to know what our managers think of us (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010)?

An employee at the casino recalls that a pregnant woman was also being physically, as well as verbally, harassed by the SAPS (Anonymous worker 1, June 15 2010).

In the rural casino resort the employees come from the surrounding villages and towns. There is very little foreign employment at the casino. While laborers from the bordering countries, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, etc., try their luck at the casino resorts, they are frowned upon by the domestic labor force. They are frequently viewed as a threat to South African workers, and the union will not attempt to unionize them. There are some foreigners employed, but interestingly these are Europeans and Americans. These people are skilled casino personnel and are asked to come and work in the casinos by management. The union values these employees for their knowledge in dealing and gaming, and welcomes them. The European and American employees are granted certain benefits by the management, such as an exemption for travel costs that South African employees in similar positions are not granted. There is a distinct racial motivation here, as white South African employees are also given travel benefits that black South Africans are not. This deepens the union’s animosity towards the company, but not towards the European and American employees, as they see their technical knowledge as valuable to the South African employees at the casino. There is a certain “trickle down” mentality at play here. They believe that the knowledge that these foreign employees possess will be passed to the domestic staff, and that this will have an empowering effect on the South African staff. However, while the South African staff is being trained to work at the casino, this

training is not necessarily benefiting them greatly. This is reflected by the fact that management are sending gaming staff to university to get training in order to do their jobs better, but they are not given any credit for their education. On the other hand, white employees are being treated better in this sense as well, as their training is credited (Anonymous union representative 2, June 25 2010). This can be construed as a form of work force control by the company. They train their staff – which is initially unskilled people with little or no school attendance – in order for them to do their jobs better, but at the same time they are denied the papers that confirm this training. This means that they cannot apply for jobs in other places as they have no official documentation of their skills, while at the same time they feel indebted to the company for having been sent to university to better their skills, effectively forcing them to stay where they are. One union representative put it this way: "Our workers here cannot go to Europe, you know. While they may prove that they are quality workers, they have no formal skills, nothing" (Anonymous union representative 2, June 25 2010). This is true for both the rural and the urban casino. At the rural casino there is also an in-house training school.

While the strike action at the urban resort was peaceful, the union acted more militant at the rural casino. Here the strike action was more aggressive, and even became violent. Strikers at the rural resort actually blocked the entrance to the resort, so that the workers who were not on strike were unable to enter the premises. According to one worker, the management, its security officers or the SAPS, never attempted to intervene with what the striking workers were doing (Anonymous worker 6, June 25 2010). Rather, they were keeping an eye on the strikers to assure that the non-striking workers who were not allowed entrance to the resort were not being physically abused or threatened. The rationale behind this supervision might have been to find something to frame the strikers for, and thereby granting the company a legitimate reason to precipitate an end to the strike action. When violence broke out, and strikers began to overturn vehicles and setting fire to things, shots were fired and people were arrested, and the strikers dispersed. Prior to this, however, there was apparently no verbal or physical abuse on the part of the company or the SAPS whatsoever (Anonymous union representative 3, June 25 2010).

There might be certain structural reasons for the distinction in militancy among the workers and the company's response to the strike action. While the workers at the resorts are all represented by the same union and are working for the same company, there are some important geographical features that distinguish the two resorts. While unemployment is high in South

Africa in general, unemployment is felt differently according to where one lives. At the urban resort the workers are constantly reminded of the high unemployment rates, as they are living in areas with visible poverty gaps, and a "reserve army" of labor ready to fill any available position as soon as the opportunity presents itself. Being too militant during strike action could be a way of providing such an opportunity for others to fill the positions of the strikers, as the company would easily find new labor power in the immediate surrounding areas. This was admitted by one of the union representatives: "As much as I want to fight management I still want to work. So I don't want to help the company so much that they end up having replacements after the strike" (Anonymous union representative 1, June 15 2010). The threat of easy replacement could explain why security and the SAPS were prone to violence and abuse at the urban casino as well. It could be claimed that this was a way of keeping the strikers in check by letting them know that any misstep would have dire consequences for them. The industrial action did also have consequences at the urban resort. One of the workers I talked to was fired from his position at the casino as a consequence of his participation in the industrial action (Anonymous worker 2, June 15 2010). He was receiving assistance from the shop steward at the resort at the time of the interviews. At the rural resort, no workers had been fired at the time of the interviews, even if the industrial action was more militant and aggressive here. The geographical differences that result from South Africa's historical trajectory have consequences for the agency of SACCAWU in geographical terms. The union can allow itself to more militant and aggressive at the rural casino resort since the workers there find more backing in the local community through tribal chiefs and villagers that are actively engaged in the strike action. The rural are also has a lower population density, and a labor reserve force is not as readily available as it is for the urban casino resort. At the urban casino resort the threat of replacement is always present as the densely populated townships that have evolved from the squatter settlements of apartheid South Africa serves as a huge labor reserve. The lack of local community engagement that may result from a fragmented working class and high unemployment also means that the union is unable to rely on much support from their communities. The repression of the labor force during apartheid in the bantustans might also explain why the union is more aggressive in the rural area of the old bantustan, as the opportunity to oppose private capital has historically not been as easy here.

Summary

The analysis has shown that Sun International is able to make use of weak labor-regulating institutions. The union does not have access to a bargaining council and the CCMA does not have the necessary authority to resolve labor disputes. This means that the only option for the union to legally enforce their demands is by taking them to a labor court. This gives the company a lot of time to stall negotiations and deny the workers the agreed upon benefits. Further SACCAWU is able to benefit from its membership in COSATU which are part of the tripartite government alliance. COSATU is able to utilize its resources to mobilize solidarity for the trade union at both national and international scales. However, as was shown in the section on labor brokers, COSATU has power, but lacks the necessary influence to push ANC to ban labor broking. Also, the trade union did not get anywhere with its demands to the company to stop using labor brokers. The company is in its legal rights to use labor brokers, and as long as this is a viable method for attracting cheap labor they will probably continue to do so. SACCAWU's demand for an end to labor broking was misplaced as this issue must be fought on the political stage, not with private economic interests. The trade union was also able to use the mega events as a way to pressure the company, even if it was not wholly intended. These events could have been used more aggressively to pressure the company during the industrial action, but other concerns were stronger. The emergent structures of the mega events affected a set of actions that potentially reinforced the capitalist structure in the long run. Intentional actions may have unintentional consequences.

As was shown in the section on the geographical scales of labor agency, SACCAWU and COSATU actively created an international scale of labor solidarity through the use of international affiliates and sympathizers. COSATU also enabled a national scale of labor solidarity through TV interviews. A strong umbrella organization was crucial for the length of the industrial action, but it is unclear whether the union's demands would have been met without the international pressure.

Finally it was demonstrated how geographical differences played a role in determining the way the industrial action played out in the workplaces.

7. Conclusions

This thesis has answered the following research questions:

> *What structures and geographical scales did SACCAWU utilize during the industrial action, and what impact did these structures and geographical scales have on the outcome of the industrial action?*
>
> *How did the geographical differences, partly resulting from the heterogeneous labor history of South Africa, influence SACCAWU's agency during the strike action?*

The structures and the scales

Structures have been viewed not as determining and dominant to agency in this thesis, but rather as strategic and agency as structured but also structuring. The agency of SACCAWU interacts with a plethora of emergent structures, and it would not be possible to identify all of them. The ones that have been identified are the capitalist democracy of South Africa, local communities, the trade union movement in South Africa and internationally and the mega events of the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup and the 2010 FIFA World Cup, and the union utilized both local, regional, national and international scales of labor solidarity.

The use of local communities differed. At the urban resort the local communities are all but absent in assisting the union in their struggle. The individualizing of the working class means that people in the townships surrounding the urban casino resort are more preoccupied with their own economic progress instead of joining in a battle for the betterment of the working class as a whole, and the casino employees in particular. At the rural resort the local community was more active in the strike action. The reason for this is probably that the social structures are different here as people live in villages and smaller towns, and that there seems to be a more militant air about the workers and union representatives. They actively utilized the local community by asking for charity and help with their strike. The customers were also engaged and the situation was explained to them, which led many of them to sympathize with the workers, and end up boycotting the resort during the industrial action. The impact of the local community was

probably not very big, but the fact that MVGs were opting out might have put some pressure on the company to end the industrial action.

COSATU can be viewed as an emergent structure for the agency of SACCAWU. Since COSATU is in the tripartite alliance with the ruling parties it does have quite a bit of power. During the industrial action local and regional representatives managed to assist the union in getting the news about the industrial action out to South African via television reports. It also managed to put a lot of pressure on the company by getting unions from other countries and international labor organizations engaged in the industrial action. This strategy was undoubtedly helped by the fact that the World Cup was upcoming, and this was used as a way to engage FIFA and potential hotel customers before the event by making them aware of what SACCAWU and COSATU perceived as the arrogance of the company, resulting in the company wanting to end the industrial action for fear of losing customers during the World Cup.

The company, of course, tries to limit the knowledge of the industrial action, and especially the news of it reaching international visitors and FIFA officials. The fact that SACCAWU and COSATU managed to reach these agents probably had a great impact on the company's resolve to end the industrial action.

The geographical and historical effects

Geography matters for several reasons. First of all there is a difference between the urban and the rural casino resorts in a demographic sense. The population density is higher around the urban resort, and this coupled with high levels of unemployment and a fragmented class consciousness, led to little support from the local community. Also, the company was able to make better use of strategies to try to control the union and the workers during the strike action through coaxing them to come back to work, and racial and sexist slur. The threat of not having a job after the industrial action is ended restricts the militancy of the trade union. At the rural resort the unemployment and the reserve labor is not as deeply felt, and they are able to be more militant and aggressive in their strike action.

The history of South Africa also probably has an impact on the geographical differences between the two casino resorts. As labor was more violently controlled in the old bantustans, it is likely that the labor force on these areas are more militant now that they have the opportunity to resist private interests. Also, the making of native reserves has resulted in tribal structures in

these areas. The tribal chiefs command respect from their people, and are able to mobilize against private companies that are located on their land.

Contribution to the field

This thesis can be considered a contribution to the field of labor geography as few cases of resort tourism and of the gambling industry are available. The fact that capital has such a strong spatial fix in the casino resort industry makes it different from industries that are much less constricted in their ability to "jump" scales. This industry can neither outsource parts of their operations to geographically distant areas, so that whatever parts of the operations that are outsourced sees other companies coming to the place of production. In this industry the production of places is important, as the commodity that is being sold is recreational activities. This means that the place in which they are located becomes more than a necessity for capital in order to produce anything at all, but the physical location becomes the product. As mobility is not possible, and the location of production is fixed, the gamble for capital is not one with advantages of location (Mitchell 2005) but rather a gamble with labor.

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Appendix 1: List of informants and documents

Informants	**Date**	**Location**
Anonymous union official (national level)	June 1 2010	Johannesburg
Anonymous union representative 1 (shop steward)	June 15 2010	Urban resort
Anonymous union representative 2 (shop steward)	June 25 2010	Rural resort
Anonymous union representative 3	June 25 2010	Rural resort
Anonymous worker 1	June 15 2010	Urban resort
Anonymous worker 2	June 15 2010	Urban resort
Anonymous worker 3	June 15 2010	Urban resort
Anonymous worker 4	June 24 2010	Urban resort
Anonymous worker 5	June 24 2010	Urban resort
Anonymous worker 6	June 24 2010	Urban resort
Payn, Jonathan (member of Zabalaza)	July 12 2010	University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
Geyer, Yvette (project manager at IDASA)	July 14 2010	IDASA head offices, Pretoria
Documents	**Date**	**Location**
Aims of SACCAWU	-	-
SACCAWU profile	-	-
SACCAWU constitution	-	-
SACCAWU press releases	Between December 2009 and January 2010	-
SACCAWU memorandum to the Sun International management	-	-
Confidential business agreement	2010/2011	-
Confidential financial report	2010	-

Appendix 2: Interview guide – union officials and representatives

SA workforce

- Why do you think it is that workers in SA get low wages and poor benefits?
- Do you feel that workers in the hospitality sector is worse or better off than workers in other sectors?
- What do you feel can be done to improve the situation?

SACCAWU/Sun City Hotel strike and negotiations in general

- I understand the union took their employees at Sun International out in strike action in 2006? How did the negotiations end then?
    - Do you feel the 2009-2010 negotiations went better or worse, and why?
- Do you see any other way of getting better working conditions and wages besides strikes?
    - How do you feel about centralised negotiations?
    - How do you work politically to try to get centralised negotiations?
    - Do you have access to, and use, bargaining councils, and do you feel that bargaining councils are working well?
    - Do you feel that the CCMA is providing the service they are meant to provide in a satisfactory manner?
- In addition to the trade union, were any other civil society organisations instrumental in pushing for the demands of the union during the 2009-2010 negotiations?
    - Were any community organisations involved in the struggle? If so, which ones, and do you feel that their support was necessary?
    - Were any national organisations involved in the struggle? If so, which ones, and do you feel that their support was necessary?
    - Were any international organisations involved in the struggle? If so, which ones, and do you feel that their support was necessary?
- Do you work with international organizations on a regular basis?
- Do you believe that international worker solidarity is important to secure worker rights in SA?

Hospitality sector workforce

- Could you please briefly describe the structure of the workforce in the SA hospitality sector (gender, age, share of permanent/temporary employees, domestic/foreign)?

Trade unions/SACCAWU

- Do you feel that SA trade unions are getting more or less influential? Why?
- Do you believe that any other civil society/government/private organizations are important in the fight for workers rights? If so, which ones?
- Why do you affiliate so strongly with COSATU/ANC/SACP?

Temporary workers

- Do you in any way attempt to eliminate the trend of temporary employment through labour broking?

- Do you attempt to organize part time workers employed directly by the employer?
- Do you attempt to organize part time workers employed by labour brokers?
- Are there many temporary employees in the union? Are any of these employed through labour brokers?
- Are there any temporary workers in leading positions in SACCAWU? Are any of these employed through labour brokers?

The background for the strike

- Tell me a little bit about the Company's refusal to grant the right to have and elect a full time shop steward at the Company's Windmill Unit in Bloemfontain.
    - Were there any semi-peripheral (part time employed by the company) or peripheral (part time employed through labour brokers) candidates for the position?
    - Why do you think the company denied the union a shop steward?

Government bodies

- What role did NEDLAC/CCMA play in the run-up to the strike?
- What role did COSATU play during the strike action?
- Did ANC/SACP play any significant roles during the strike action?

Community organizations

- Which community organizations were involved in this particular strike action on the national level?
- Which community organizations were involved in the strike action in the North West/Sun City Hotel?
- Do you feel that these organizations played an important role in the strike action, and if so, why?

International organizations

- Which international organizations were involved in the strike action?
- Do you feel that these organizations played an important role in the strike action, and if so, why?

Timing

- Did you deliberately time the strike action to coincide with the Christmas and New Year holidays?
    - Do you feel that this timing was successful in terms of achieving your demands?
- Did you deliberately time the strike action close to the FIFA World Cup?
    - Do you feel that this timing was successful in terms of achieving your demands?

Wages and workers' rights

- The previous minimum wages was, according to a SACCAWU press release R66 479.00, and after the negotiations the new minimum is R72 295.91. Is this correct?
- Who receives the minimum wages?

- Has the across the board increase of 8.75% effective from 1st July 2009 been paid to workers as of the agreed upon date of 31st January 2010?
- What were the shift allowances before the R3.00 increase?
- Did you get the double Sunday allowance?
- How do workers' subsidies work?
    - Home ownership subsidy scheme.
    - Length of service subsidy scheme.
    - Educational assistance subsidy scheme.
- Are these schemes exclusive to permanent staff, or is temporary staff also included in these schemes?

Casualisation of labour

- In one of the SACCAWU press releases it says that "the Company is hell-bent on reconfiguring the nature of the relationship between the parties." What exactly does this mean?
- Was the union successful in winning the same wage increases and rights for temporary workers (both employed by the company and through labour brokers)?

The structure of the workforce

- How is the gender division at Sun City Hotel?
- Where do the workers come from?
    - Do they mostly come from the old bantustan of Bophuthatswana?
- What qualifications do the workers in the hotel have?

At the picket line

- In your opinion, how did the hotel management respond to the strike action?
    - Were the strikers met with violence?
    - Were the strikers met with any kind of verbal abuse?
    - Were permanent workers treated differently from temporary workers?
    - Were union members treated differently from non-union members?
    - Did the hotel management try to break up the strike in any way, and if so, how?
    - Did the hotel management try to pin workers' interests against each other?

After the strike

- Did you get what you wanted?
- Do you feel that this strike was a victory?
- How will you go on fighting for the unresolved issues?